Tamil TIMES

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– Voltaire

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THE ENFORCED MUSLIM EXODUS

The conflict in Sri Lanka, particularly in the North-East, assumed a new level of brutality when tens of thousands of Muslim people were compelled to evacuate from their homes in the Jaffna, Mannar and Mullaitivu areas of the North and made to flee towards the south where they had to be accommodated in hastily arranged 'refugee centres'. Whole families, including women and children, were forced to abandon their homes. A letter dated 8 November received from a catholic priest who was returning from Colombo to Jaffna stated, ***'On my journey to the north, I witnessed thousands of innocent Muslims in lorries, tractors and carts wading their way through mud and rain to beat the . . . . deadline. I was reminded of the exodus and violence that preceded the partition of India into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan'.*** *(The author of the letter himself has left the blank in this quotation). The fleeing Muslims were not permitted to take even their personal belongings, and following their enforced departure their homes were reportedly ransacked and looted.*

Who was responsible for this Muslim exodus? Who were the armed persons who went about in pick-up trucks with loud-hailers calling upon the Muslims to evacuate? Who was responsible for setting the deadline for their departure? Who or which group could have had the required power in the areas concerned to cause such an enforced departure of so many thousands of people?

The reason for this enforced Muslim exodus is sought to be attributed to two factors, namely that the Muslim parties are demanding a separate Muslim Provincial Council, and that Muslim home guards are collaborating with government forces in a campaign of terror and murder against Tamils especially in the east of the island. No doubt these assertions are true. But the fact that these are true does not in any way justify the forcible uprooting of the general mass of Muslim population from areas in which they have lived for centuries and turn them into landless and homeless refugees.

What is worse is that this outrage has been committed purportedly in the name and interest of the Tamil community by those who claim to represent it. The Tamil community has itself gone through the agonising experience of producing over three hundred thousand refugees seeking shelter and security in foreign lands during recent years due to the violence unleashed against it merely because its political leaderships had raised on their behalf the right to self determination. Every member of the Tamil community must have by now known and experienced what it is to be an ethnic minority in a country where those in power fortified with the support of a numerical majority decide to deal with demands raised by the minority not by political means but by force and military means.

The inhuman treatment meted out to the Muslim minority in compelling its members to evacuate from their homes in northern areas, merely because some Muslim organisations have raised the question of a separate Muslim Provincial Council, is not only a cowardly and shameless exercise of brute force, but also deserves the severest condemnation and unequivocal repudiation by all members of the Tamil community in whose name it was purportedly done. Just as Tamil political or militant groups had the right to raise the demand for autonomy, federalism or even a separate state, the Muslim political parties too have the same democratic right to raise their own demands. Whether these demands are justifiable or not, right or wrong, is not the question.

Besides the democratic, humanitarian, moral and ethical aspects involved, it is politically a suicidal adventure which is bound to have long term adverse consequences for Tamil-Muslim relations. For some time now, forces in south Sri Lanka including those within the government have been trying to drive a wedge between the Tamils and Muslims so that the merged North-East province achieved through the much maligned Indo-Sri Lanka agreement could be bifurcated again. To this end, efforts have been made in the recent past to incite Muslim-Tamil clashes in the east. Some of the clashes, resulting in large scale loss of property and life among both communities, have been orchestrated with agent provocateurs being planted to ignite the flame. The feeling of resentment and insecurity among the Muslims of the east following the recent massacres in the two mosques at Kattankudy constituted an opportunity gratuitously offered to the government to create and arm Muslim home guards tutored and directed to carry out the diabolical task of creating a permanent divide between the Tamil and Muslim communities.

The case for a merged North-East provincial unit has been supported on the basis that the vast majority of the people – Tamils and Muslims – inhabiting the province are Tamil-speaking. While recognising and ensuring the protection of their separate cultural identities, a continuing alliance of both these communities is an absolutely essential prerequisite to make a successful endeavour to have the merged North-East intact and resist the efforts of those forces which want them delinked at any cost. The tragedy is that those responsible for the enforced evacuation of the Muslim population from northern areas have seriously undermined the prospect for amicable relations between the two communities thereby objectively and concretely helping those who want the North-East re-divided again into two provinces.

Over 1000 Houses Destroyed in 'Operation Jaya Shakthi'

The military offensive code-named 'Operation Jaya Shakthi' launched by the government during the third week of October in the Palai-Kankesanthurai sector in the Jaffna peninsula resulted in the destruction of over one thousand homes, the northern Army Commander, Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa told a team of journalists who had flown to the area on 23 October.

The destruction of these houses had become necessary, according to him, in securing about forty kilometres of territory around the Sri Lanka Air Force base at Palali and the Naval Base at Kankesanthurai. In this operation the KKS cement factory which had previously been taken over by the Tigers was also recaptured by the forces after heavy fighting.

The visiting journalists reportedly saw the KKS harbour fully secure and navy gunboats in anchorage and witnessed a navy gunboat backed by an airforce helicopter gunship pounding and bombarding alleged LTTE positions on land.

The Major had claimed that houses in large stretches of built-up areas had been fortified by the LTTE with extensive networks of concrete underground bunkers and tunnels. The houses with such fortifications had been located in Palali, Vasavilan, Kattuwan, Kurumbachitti, Kankesanthurai and Tellipalai.

When the journalists visited the area where the houses had been destroyed, they did not see a single civilian as that had been vacated before the offensive began. The Vasavilan Tamil school recaptured from the Tigers had a massive concrete bunker built in a class room. Tigers had also built a huge concrete trench six feet deep to a distance of over two kilometres in close proximity to the Palali airforce base to enable a full scale assault on the base. This trench had been built making use of the front compounds of houses.

Army Commander Lt. General Hamilton Wanasinghe said in another interview that 24 soldiers were killed and 228 injured in this offensive.

LTTE Spurns Mediation Offers

LONDON – The chief of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Velupillai Prabhakaran, has turned down offers of mediation of the civil war in Sri Lanka from more than 100 organizations, according to the international office of the LTTE here.

The former commander of LTTE forces in the Jaffna peninsula, Maj. S. Kittu, told *India Abroad* this week that about 120 groups had made negotiation offers to Prabhakaran through the London office of the LTTE.

'The offers have been turned down', Kittu said. 'Prabhakaran's view is that in view of the offensive by the Sri Lankan forces, there is nothing to talk about, and our resistance cannot stop'.

He said that Prabhakaran had told the organizations that the situation must first reach a point where there was reason to talk. Prabhakaran thanked the groups for the offer 'but told them the situation was not yet ripe', Kittu said.

He reported that the Australian and Norwegian governments had also offered to mediate, adding, 'we understand that in any international mediation effort, India will be left out'.

Kittu warned against efforts by the Sri Lankan government to involve Islamic nations against the LTTE. He added that Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya 'Fortunately turned down a demand by a group of nine Muslim delegates from Sri Lanka for aid to the Sri Lankan forces'.

Muslim Role

A key member of the delegation, Kittu said, was Ashraf of the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress. 'The number of Muslim Tamils numbers about one million, and there is a clear move to turn them against the LTTE', he said.

In Amparai district, he said, Muslim Home Guards trained and armed by the Sri Lankan forces had killed more than 2,000 Tamils.

'The Sri Lankan government is turning Tamil against Tamil and turning this into a Hindu-Muslim fight', Kittu said.

This could potentially turn against the Sri Lankan government, he indicated, adding. 'Ashraff has already called for a separate Muslim state within Sri Lanka'. But meanwhile tension between Muslims and other Tamils in the east is spreading to the north, he said.

He reiterated his demand that India help the LTTE in the face of the reported arming of Sri Lankan forces by the Pakistani and Chinese governments, and the possible intervention of other countries.

According to Kittu, who says his office here is in constant touch with Prabhakaran, the LTTE supremo is confident of countering the Sri Lankan offensive. He said Colombo's forces had acquired T-85 tanks and Y-12, Y-13 and Y-16 bombers from China.

'Our military research group is developing weapons to counter these', he said. The development and modification of weapons is being overseen directly by Prabhakaran, he added.

– **Sanjay Suri,** *India Abroad, 16.11.90.*

Headless Bodies Washed Ashore

A number of headless bodies of adult males have been washed ashore in Akkaraipattu and Tirukovil recently.

It appears that the necks have been cut with some guillotine type machine, as the cut appears very fine and smooth which is not possible with any sword.

Fifty-year-old Mrs. Periyathamby Marimuthu of Vinayagapuram identified one of the bodies washed ashore as one resembling that of her son called Rajendiran alias Raju aged 19. According to eye-witnesses about 32 such bodies had been washed ashore. Inquests were not held into these killings.

Whenever a body is washed ashore, the people living in the locality bury it on the beach itself. They explained that the law is dead in this area, and there is no person in authority to entertain such complaints.

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A BILLION DOLLARS WITH A WARNING

Donor countries pledged Sri Lanka $1 billion in aid for 1991 at their annual meeting at the World Bank offices in Paris on 25 October, but warned that future assistance could depend on Sri Lanka's human rights record.

The meeting commended Sri Lanka's careful adherence to the IMF-World Bank stabilisation programme for its economy, achieving 2.3% growth last year, the decline of fiscal deficits and an increase in foreign exchange reserves. There was concern, however, over the continuing climb in domestic inflation – officially 20%, unofficially 30% – and fears that the cost of the new war in the North and the Gulf crisis would leave Sri Lanka's economy in ruins.

Analysts say the war with the Tigers will have cost $250 million by the end of the year. The loss of remittances from 100,000 Sri Lankan workers in the Gulf, higher oil prices and lost tea exports will cost $100 million this year and a projected $400 million in 1991 – 25% of Sri Lanka's export income.

Emergency surgery in the public sector coupled with a tight rein on imports is the country's only hope. The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation currently loses $365,000 a day and there is a projected budget deficit this year of $1.5 billion.

Concern was also expressed by donor governments over possible adverse effects of the World Bank's three-year structural adjustment programme on Sri Lanka's poor and unemployed. A study on poverty in Sri Lanka conducted by the Bank earlier this year concluded that only 6% of Sri Lanka's poor are unemployed and that poverty is disproportionately concentrated among families with many children.

How many is not clear – the national average is four – but observers say Sri Lanka's costly and controversial Poverty Alleviation Programme, *Janasaviya* which promotes saving and small business is likely to be replaced by a national infant nutrition programme to target the most vulnerable.

The removal of Government subsidies on rice, flour, fuel and fertilizer earlier this year has caused considerable hardship to many people as prices spiralled.

Two days before the Paris meeting, the 12 countries of the European Economic Community (EEC) released a statement in Brussels deploring Sri Lanka's human rights record drawing attention to the killing of journalist Richard de Zoysa in February and the seizure of documents from Opposition MP, Mahinda Rajapakse on his way to Geneva to testify to the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Future aid to Sri Lanka could be conditional upon improvements in human rights the statement said, a view reiterated by European countries in the meeting. Sources in Brussels said European governments had decided that a series of private representations to the Sri Lankan Government had produced little effect and that it was time to go public.

At a news conference in Paris, lobbied by Tamil activists protesting genocide, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister D.B. Wijetunga said his Government had introduced constitutional reforms protecting fundamental rights and that foreign reports of atrocities in Sri Lanka were 'grossly exaggerated'. Diplomatic sources estimate 30,000 people were killed in Sri Lanka last year by security forces and insurgents.

– Sri Lanka Monitor.

Canada Deplores Human Rights Abuses in Sri Lanka

Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, expressed his concern over continuing instances of human rights abuses in Sri Lanka and the attendant erosion of the rule of law. Mr. Clark also pointed to growing shortages of food and medicine in northern Sri Lanka as causing severe hardship to the civilian population, a news release of the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs said.

The release added: 'While there has been some improvement in the general human rights situation in recent months, it is evident that a greater commitment will be required to ensure respect for the law and to bring the perpetrators of human rights to justice. It remains the ultimate responsibility of the Government of Sri Lanka, as the duly constituted authority, to ensure that rights are respected and to set the patterns of conduct for others to follow', Mr. Clark said.

With the current intense fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) there have been a significant number of civilian casualties resulting in a major exodus from much of the northern region. The distribution of food and medicine has become increasingly difficult. The civilian population is suffering from hunger and starvation and from a virtual absence of medical services.

Mr. Clark urged the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that food and medicine are delivered to the north for distribution by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He called on the LTTE not to hinder these humanitarian efforts to safeguard the welfare of civilians.

'We are witnessing a very serious situation in humanitarian terms in northern Sri Lanka. Every effort must be made to ensure that innocent civilians in the north do not become victims of the current conflict'.

Mr. Clark called on both sides in the conflict to return to negotiations as the most appropriate means to resolve the dispute and to ensure the safety of civilians in the north and east. Canada, along with the European Community and Nordic countries, and the United States and Australia made a 'demarche' to the Sri Lankan delegation at the Consultative Group meeting on Development Assistance chaired by the World Bank in Paris on October 25.

ABDUCTION OF KUGAMOORTHY

MIRJE expresses its deep concern regarding the abduction of Mr. K. Kugamoorthy, a programme producer of the Tamil service of the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation and a member of the National Committee of the Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality.

Mr. Kugamoorthy was returning from work and was travelling on his motor bicycle down Jawatte Road on Thursday, 6th September at about 5.30pm when unidentified persons in a Mitsubishi jeep, bearing number 9 – 9164, including one person in khaki uniform, dragged him into the jeep and sped away.

The whereabouts of Mr. Kugamoorthy, are still unknown. MIRJE and other human rights activists have been attempting to locate him and have failed. A few days after his abduction his landlord is reported to have said that the Cinnamon Gardens Police informed him that Mr. Kugamoorthy's motor bicycle was at the Police Station and could be retrieved. The International Committee of the Red Cross has also recorded his case and is attempting to trace him.

Mr. Kugamoorthy was detained by the Mt. Lavinia Police for 24 hours in late July and released with no charges brought against him. Mr. Kugamoorthy himself was mystified by this incident and decided to disregard it. It is of all the more concern therefore why he had to be released from official custody only to be picked up in this underhand manner.

The MIRJE has written a letter to

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President Premadasa about his disappearance and released a press statement and urged all human rights activists to write to President Premadasa, The State Minister for Defence and The Inspector General of Police calling for an investigation into the disappearance of Mr. Kugamoorthy and ensure his safety and security.

Sri Lanka's Unnoticed War

While the world watches the Persian Gulf for premonitions of a war to be waged with ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, a vicious cycle of violence has recurred on the island paradise of Sri Lanka, where government troops use Iraqi helicopters and howitzers and Israeli speedboats to attack the guerrillas of a secessionist movement called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

For civilian suffering, intercommunal hatreds and sheer savagery, the conflict in Sri Lanka matches those in Lebanon, Azerbaijan or Northern Ireland. At present, the government of President Ranasinghe Premadasa seeks to extirpate the separatist Tigers by an aerial bombardment and straffing of civilian areas in Sri Lanka's northeastern province.

The toll on the civilians has been heart-rending. Thousands have been killed or injured. Nearly a million Tamils of the north have been driven from their homes, and the state minister of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu says that 90,000 Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka have fled to India. Since Premadasa cannot realistically hope to liquidate the fanatical Tigers by military means, his campaign of state terror against the Tamil population of the northeastern province amounts to little more than gratuitous cruelty.

The Tigers themselves are masters of such cruelty. They have massacred not only government forces but also innocent civilians – Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Moslems and Tamil Hindus who do not accept their terrorist tactics.

The solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic vendetta/civil war must be political. The central government should offer a true devolution of power in a new federal constitution that would maintain the unity of Sri Lanka while permitting the persecuted Tamils a large measure of autonomy.

Only then can Tamil moderates offer their people an alternative to terrorism. As a first step, Premadasa must cease the bombing of civilians. This is the message he should hear from Washington.

– Editorial, The Boston Globe, 23.10.90

Thousands Seek Asylum Abroad

Almost 10,000 Tamil asylum-seekers arrived in Europe in the first six months of this year. That was before the June war and a million people were made refugees in north-east Sri Lanka. If the Tigers mean to fight on, will south India, where 120,000 Sri Lankans have fled the war in the last four months, become a staging post for a new flood of Tamil refugees to the West?

Reports submitted to this year's session of the European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) in Geneva in late September say 10,000 Sri Lankan Tamils claimed political asylum in Europe between January and June this year.

The major receiving countries continue to be Germany with 2,503 applications and Switzerland with 2,400. The Swiss have a tough new policy towards Tamils and have forcibly returned 30 asylum-seekers to Colombo this year for abuse of asylum procedures and criminal offences.

In France, where there were 1,304 applications, the recognition rate for Tamils has fallen from 67% to 41% this year reflecting a hardening of attitudes as refugee figures continue to climb. Britain received 1,321 Tamil applications – close to last year's annual figure – and Holland's 1,404 was another significant increase.

There are now 130,000 Sri Lankan asylum-seekers in Europe. Outside France, less than 5% have full refugee status, but many others may try to join them, the ECRE meeting was told, if the war in northern Sri Lanka continues.

Increased surveillance by Indian and Sri Lankan naval patrols in the Palk Strait cut the refugee flow to south India this month to 5,000. Over 70 refugees drowned in two separate incidents off the Tamil Nadu coast on 6 October, when overcrowded boats capsized after being challenged by the Indian navy.

Sri Lankan naval patrols detained an Indian trawler carrying 3,000 litres of diesel destined for the LTTE off Talaimannar two days later, and observers say the escape route across the Palk Strait is increasingly hazardous.

Over 120,000 Sri Lankan Tamils have arrived in south India since 11 June and there are another 100,000 who fled between 1985 and 1987. Tamil Nadu now has a policy of distributing Lankan refugees to a network of camps throughout the rural areas to diffuse the growing political and economic pressures in areas where arrivals are concentrated.

Mandapam camp near Rameswaram is a pressure point. After police arrested several refugees on 28 October, two refugees were wounded when police fired on a crowd gathered outside Mandapam police station. A number of policemen were also injured.

Middle class refugees avoid the camps, many of which are said to be under militant control, and after registration slip away to Madras or to family or friends. Many of those with assets or relatives in the West will inevitably seek sanctuary for their children away from the vortex of militant politics which has decimated a generation. They will not be put off, refugee workers say, by 'Country of First Asylum' regulations in Western countries where their transit through India will invalidate refugee claims.

Hundreds now queue daily outside the Indian High Commission in Colombo for a visa. For some it will only be the first leg of a longer journey.

– Sri Lanka Monitor.

Long Queues for Visas to India

by Thomas Abraham

The queue starts to form early in the morning, and by 9am there is a patient line of several hundred men, women and children standing in the sun outside the Indian High Commission here, waiting for that magic stamp on their passports that will allow them into India.

A large number of those standing in the visa queue are Tamils making their way to India to escape the war in the north and east, and several of them will get their visas. But growing numbers of people do not, and there have been loud grumbles against the High Commission by Tamils who have been rejected for a visa.

'It is easier to cross over illegally by boat than to get a visa legally', said one elderly Tamil from Jaffna who is now settled in Colombo. 'Why is India doing this to us?'

'They give visas to Muslims and Sinhalese without any problem, but it is impossible for a Jaffna Tamil to get a visa', complained another Tamil.

A former Tamil civil servant was moved to write to Mr. V.P. Singh complaining that 'our applications are totally rejected' by the Indian High Commission.

Deluge of applications: Harassed High Commission officials deluged by as many as 400 visa applications a day however, strongly reject any charges of bias, and point out they are only

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People & Politics

★ DIPLOMATIC EMBARRASSMENT

At a time when the Sri Lankan government is making rather futile attempts to conceal its human rights record, it faces severe embarrassment in many western capitals as several Sinhala and Muslim officers attached to Sri Lanka embassies abroad have sought political asylum. Some officers posted to diplomatic missions in the United States, Canada and Australia have refused to return after completing their assignments and sought political asylum in these countries.

According to an official of the Foreign Ministry in Colombo, some of the officers had sought political asylum after sending in their resignations and others had gone on unauthorised or no-pay leave.

To add to the embarrassment of the Colombo government, the Canadian government has already refused to grant visas to two newly appointed officers of the Sri Lanka High Commission in Ottawa as the previous officers had not returned to Sri Lanka and still remain in Canada having sought political asylum.

★ THE MOSSAD AFFAIR

Is President Premadasa engaged in an attempt to identify, expose and denigrate close associates of former President J.R. Jayawardene? It seems so from the wide publicity given in the state-owned newspapers to a recent detection of a smuggling attempt by a highly placed woman and the quick response on the part of Premadasa in appointing a Commission to probe the revelations about the Mossad role in Sri Lanka and leaks regarding possible links in this affair even before the investigations have officially commenced.

Mrs. Mahadevi Prasanga Menidiwela, the daughter of Mr. W.M.P.B. Menidiwela who functioned as Secretary to former President Jayawardene, missed her flight to Singapore recently when she was caught by Customs Officers attempting to smuggle foreign currency amounting to 10,000 US dollars and 2000 Singapore dollars. The undeclared currency was forfeited and a fine of Rs.1,336,080 was imposed which has since been paid.

What is significant is not the attempt at smuggling by a person of such elevated connections – this is not something unusual or unexpected in Sri Lanka – but the wide and continuing publicity given to the incident and the subsequent investigations in the media. The media in Sri Lanka is usually coy about such normal journalistic practice.

The Commission to probe the allegations contained in ex-Mossad agent Victor Ostrovsky's book *By Way of Deception*, would appear to have begun its work in earnest. Reports indicate that the former Cabinet Minister for Mahaveli Development, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, a former Secretary of the Mahaveli Ministry, a Deputy Inspector General of Police, a Brigadier in the Sri Lankan army and Mrs. Penny Jayawardene, the daughter-in-law of former President Jayawardene, are to be interviewed and investigated in connection with the revelation that the Israeli Secret Service, Mossad caused the Mahaveli Development Authority to dishonestly obtain funds from the World Bank for the purpose of paying for Israeli arms.

The Israeli Interest Section in Colombo was formally opened in 1984 when the present Minister of Education, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali was doubling up as Minister of National Security and Deputy Minister for Defence. Following the revelation of a secret visit by the former Secretary to the Ministry of Information, Mr. Douglas Liyanage, he resigned his position. Whether these gentlemen will also figure in the present investigations by the Presidential Commission is also being speculated.

Meanwhile, the maverick Indian parliamentarian, Dr. Subramania Swamy, has claimed that it was he who first introduced the LTTE to the Israelis which later led to the training provided to LTTE cadres by Mossad. In an interview with the correspondent of 'India Abroad', Dr. Swamy said that LTTE representatives in the United States had met him and sought his help through his 'Israeli contacts' to provide them with military training.

'I immediately telephoned David Kimche, whom I knew very well, and had met with through my Harvard contacts, and Kimche, who was then the director-general of the Israeli Foreign Office, told me to put these guys in touch with David Mantai who was the political officer in Washington', Dr. Swamy said adding that he knew for a fact that Mantai then met with the LTTE representatives and on the strength of Kimche's backing had assured the LTTE that Mossad would help them in their training.

Acknowledging that he had been a sympathiser of the LTTE, but had fallen out with the group after he was attacked by LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham who 'accused me of being a CIA agent', he said that Balasingham had made these charges when Dr. Swamy had publicly announced that he had put together a team of retired Indian Generals who had promised to train Tamil militants. He claimed that LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran had subsequently sent several messages to him apologising for Balasingham's statement and imploring him to continue to help them in their efforts. 'But I have absolutely no sympathy for them now and I believe that the LTTE has been responsible for all the misery of the Tamils in Sri Lanka'.

Dr. Swamy further claiming that h was 'still in touch with my friends in Israel' said that the LTTE as recently 'as five months ago' had asked the Israelis to help them once again, 'but the Israelis turned them down'.

★ WHITHER TAMIL MILITANTS

There was a time all Tamil militant groups were fighting the Sri Lankan government and its forces. At that time, all of them received official and unofficial Indian backing and support. Subsequent to the commencement of its honeymoon with President Premadasa and his government, the LTTE spokesman Mr. Anton Balasingham even went to the extent of alleging that the Indian government was once using the LTTE as a 'mercenary force' to destabilise Sri Lanka. At this time, the other militant groups, PLOTE, EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO were characterised as 'traitors' and 'Indian Quislings' by the LTTE. With the help and support from the Sri Lankan forces, the LTTE progressively smashed most of the bases and camps of its rival groups. At this time as the LTTE was acclaimed by the Colombo media as a 'patriotic force' taking the 'foreign Indian occupation force' on the battlefield, the other Tamil militant groups accused the LTTE of being 'Quislings' of Premadasa.

With the departure of the IPKF in March this year and the virtual takeover of the North-East by the LTTE with the consent of the government, there appeared to be some clarity in the coalition of forces on either side. The traditional enemies, the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, had come together on an anti-Indian platform to settle all outstanding issues by friendly negotiations. The other Tamil militant groups, weakened and beaten badly by the combined government and LTTE alliance and struggling for mere survival, were united, if not organisationally, on an anti-LTTE-Premadasa platform, but could do very little.

Since the outbreak of the Government-LTTE war on June 11 this year, the situation has been completely reversed. The 'war to the finish' between the government and the LTTE is continuing. The LTTE has been repeatedly calling for Indian support to resist

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THE MUSLIM EXODUS

Rita Sebastian From Colombo

Deteriorating Tamil-Muslim relations was further aggravated when, in the last week of October, the Tigers ordered over 50,000 Muslims out of the northern districts. The People's Front of The Liberation Tigers (PFLT), the LTTE's political wing, denied the ultimatum given to the Muslims to move out of the north, or face the consequences. The threat was implicit. Deputy leader of the PFLT, Karikalan said in Batticaloa that it was the Tamils in the Eastern Province, angered over Muslims ravaging their villages, specially in the Eastern Batticaloa District, and Muslim homeguards massacring hundreds of innocent Tamil civilians, who had moved to the north and ordered the Muslims out.

Thousands of Muslims who arrived in the south however had a different story to relate. While some charged groups of armed LTTE cadres going around Muslim villages with hailers, and ordering them to hand over the valuables at the village mosque and leave within a given date, others spoke of being ordered to lock their valuables inside their homes, hand over the keys, and leave. They presented a most distressing sight, arriving in boats and in tightly packed lorries, most of them clutching plastic bags with a change of clothes. Some with only the clothes on their backs.

The Tigers as well as a large segment of the Muslims lay the present Tamil-Muslim conflict at the door of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress. SLMC President, A.M. Ashraff is looked on as the villain of the piece who, by demanding a separate Muslim Council in a merged North-East Province is accused of playing divisive politics, driving a wedge between the two communities, who until now have been accommodated within the broad definition of a Tamil speaking people.

Ashraff refuted the allegation making it known that SLMC went to the parliamentary polls in February 1989 asking for a mandate for the creation of a separate Muslim Council in the North-East Region. And what was more, he said, Mannar District had voted in an SLMC member to parliament.

Ashraff counter charged the government of not providing protection to the people and attributed the plight of the Muslims in the north to the absence of the government writ in the north.

The Tiger leadership in the Eastern Province seems to be taking a different line to the northern leadership if one is to go by what they have been saying in the east.

'There are more innocent Muslims than guilty ones' says Batticaloa Tiger leader Newton who says the Tamils want to live in peace with the Muslims and are willing to concede a separate unit of administration for the Muslims if they so desire.

But it is peace that has been badly shattered and the two communities view each other with suspicion as well as a growing anger. Friends have turned combatants as thousands of refugees of both communities huddle inside refugee camps, their homes destroyed, their worldly possessions looted.

Although the government claims to have cleared Mannar Island and invited the Muslims to return to the homes they fled, offering them the protection of homeguards and security forces, the Muslims have refused to return, until the 'Tigers are completely wiped out'. A tall order considering that the Tigers who claim to have taken on the world's fourth largest army and won, feel they are indestructible. 'No power on earth can defeat us says Karikalan. But taking on the Tigers seem to pose no problems for rival groups as evidenced by TELO and PLOTE cadres, not forgetting the EPDP, the breakaway faction of the EPRLF who seem to have upstaged all the other Tamil groups in Colombo, who have put themselves into the field alongside the Sri Lankan forces, to hunt down the Tigers.

State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, vehemently opposed to arming Tamil youth, even Tamil homeguards, seems to have done a re-think.

The new strategy according to Wijeratne was to prevent innocent Tamils being identified as Tigers, Tiger supporters or sympathisers by the Muslims who have upto now played the role of the dreaded 'hooded informers' whose nod either damned you, or let you free. But the Tamil 'identifiers' are no more welcome than the Muslims.

Civilians totally apolitical have, in almost a decade of unprecedented violence in the North-East got trapped between various forces and often compelled, not so much to take sides, as to fall in line with those who hold the reins of power, however temporary.

A change in the political equation, as it happened when the Indians withdrew and the Tigers took defacto control of the region meant, another set of 'rulers' and a different ball game. Thirteen months later the scene changed again and with fresh hostilities erupting between the government and the Tigers it is the innocent civilians, men and women, young and old, who live in dread of being unfairly identified as sympathisers or supporters of the Tigers and therefore victimised. Passing through security check points under the watchful eye of an unofficial

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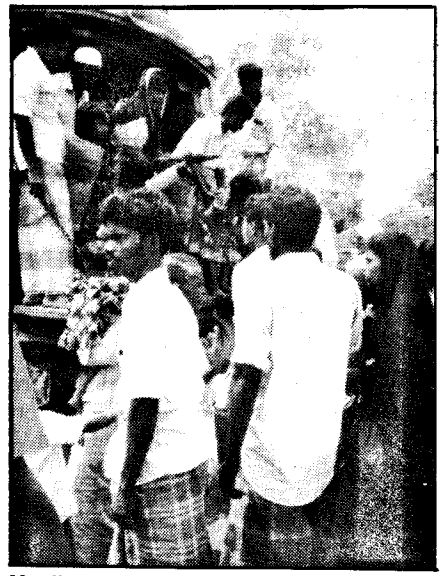

Muslims arriving from Mannar

When the Tigers lifted a ban on people leaving the peninsula for three days in early October, 15,000 people flooded into Vavuniya, many held for two days' screening at the Government refugee complex before proceeding to Colombo. The influx of refugees has increased tension in the capital with 200 Tamil youths rounded up by police on 10 October for suspected terrorist links.

A greater exodus was to follow on 23 October, when Tiger youths touring rural areas in pick-ups with loudspeakers announced Jaffna and Mullaitivu's 25,000 Muslims should leave the North by 28 October and 35,000 who live in Mannar District by 1 November. LTTE instructions were that all gold and valuables should be left at the nearest mosque.

By late October, Vavuniya was a boom town and its refugee camps with a modest 602 inhabitants on 6 October, filled to overflowing. Many others headed for Ikkirigollewa, a Muslim village south of Vavuniya or for Kalpitiya at the tip of the Puttalam peninsula. At least 30,000 Muslims have left LTTE-controlled areas, observers say. Puttalam is already swollen with 10,000 Muslim refugees who fled the east after LTTE massacres at Kattankudy and Eravur in August.

Muslims seeking sanctuary at Silavathurai, said the Tigers had expelled them because Muslim politicians continued to ask for a separate province in the East and a controlling interest in Muslim-dominated areas of Mannar and Puttalam. The Tigers' motives are unclear but many Muslims are traders and businessmen and their assets will replenish LTTE coffers.

On 1 November, Sri Lankan air, land and sea forces mounted a massive assault on Mannar island, ostensibly to allow the Muslim population to return to the District. Increased surveillance in the Palk Strait has meant fewer than 5,000 refugees escaped through Mannar to south India this month.

– Sri Lanka Monitor.

Continued From Page 9

militia in the form of armed Tamil groups has unnerved the civilian population in the North-East Region. People are quick to draw parallels between the Tamil National Army (TNA), trained and armed by India, during the last months of Indian troop occupation of the island's North-East Provinces, and the new militia that seems to have replaced it.

Complicating the issue are the paramilitary Muslim homeguards who have according to reports become a law unto themselves. The imminent danger would be an armed conflict between the armed Tamil cadres and the Muslim homeguards, both committed they say, to protect their own communities.

Finding a durable political solution to the Tamil question has now to contend with the new Muslim demand for equal status with the Tamil minority.

What form it will finally take is still unclear. What is apparent however is that political solutions seem to have receded further and further away into some distant and uncertain future.

'SO EVERY TAMIL IS A TIGER'

By Rita Sebastian

A hundred thousand refugees in over 600 camps. A statistic on official records. But neither Arumugam, Ranmenika or Nasirah are just a statistic. They are the unwilling victims of the north-east war, forced into refugee camps, and into the indignities of communal living.

Home, to Arumugam, a 34-year-old railway worker and his family of four, is floor space in an airport hanger in Clapepenberg, Trincomalee. He shares the high-roofed, zinc-sheeted, airless hanger with 167 other families. Each family's privacy coming from sarees that provide temporary walls. And each room doubling up as kitchen and bedroom.

In Ullkulama, 20 miles east of Vavuniya the monsoon rains lash the one-roomed cadjan hut Ranmenika shares with her husband and two young children. The family fled their home when Tigers attacked nearby Arantalawa.

For Nasirah and her four children the corner of a school verandah in Vavuniya is now home.

How long will it be before they can go back to the homes they fled and to livelihoods they abandoned?

According to Brigadier Lucky Wijeratne of the Trincomalee Command it is only a question of time before Arumugam and his family return to their village. A number of families of all three communities have already been resettled in their original areas of habitation, he says.

The ghost town that Trincomalee appeared to be in July, a month after fresh hostilities broke out between the Tigers and the Government, has quietly disappeared, and been replaced by a bustling township, with most of the security barriers removed, and the military having acquired a new image for itself.

Brigadier Wijeratne's claim to have brought large areas of the Trincomalee district within the security perimeter is no idle boast. 'There are areas still to be "cleared" but they are low priority areas and we are tackling them', he says.

Arbitrary arrests

But inspite of the Brigadier's efforts of returning the town to normalcy some of the earlier irritants still remain. People still talk in whispers of arbitrary arrests.

Twentythree-year-old Emilia's two month old son has not seen his father. The man, a labourer was taken into custody from a refugee camp and although his wife was told that he was released he hasn't been seen since.

In all 278 persons have been listed as missing from Trincomalee since June 15, their ages ranging from 15 to 65, six of them women, according to documented evidence by the town's citizens committee. Some are alleged to have been taken in by the security forces, others by persons moving around the town in unmarked vehicles alleged by residents to be Muslim homeguards.

The modalities of resettlement are also being questioned. A senior citizen of Trincomalee complains of Sinhalese being settled in temple lands that were earlier identified as Tamil areas. An allegation Brigadier Wijeratne dismisses as not being correct.

We found Tangavelu, old and feeble, near the Tamil village of Uppuvelli. We ask him about his family, and the tears stream down his face. That was his answer.

Sriyawathie outside the Sinhala settlement of Sirimapura lashes out at the government for foot-dragging in doling out money for reconstructing their damaged houses.

'We are still waiting for the assistance promised', she says washing clothes at the communal standpipe by the roadside. 'We have been refugees since 1987 when the Indian soldiers arrived. We are refugees still with a government that has not kept its promises'.

The measure of normalcy that has returned to Trincomalee has eluded Batticaloa. 'Half the population of the district has been displaced and 90 percent of them live on free rations' says an official who refuses to be identified. Whether it is a government official or private citizen nobody wants to be identified.

The massacre of Muslims at Kattankudy and Eravur according to most people has added a new dimension to the Tiger-Government confrontation. While the Muslims at Kattankudy haven't yet got over the grief of having members of their families brutally gunned down, Tamils in the refugee camps in Batticaloa are anguished over Tamil villages being ravaged by Muslim homeguards.

Even the invitation by the Muslims to the Tamils to return to their villages is being viewed with suspicion.

Whole villages that were predominantly Tamil inhabited along the Batticaloa-Vallaichenai road have been abandoned. Just bare walls and twisted metal remain of villages that were once thriving communities.

Some 1115 persons have been documented as missing from Batticaloa district since June. Last week there was mounting anger over the disappearance of the first officially confirmed figure of 144 persons taken into custody from the Wandaramoolai camp in the Eastern University premises, being reduced to 32.

'The government now says that only 32 were taken and that they were subsequently released. But not one of them has returned says one of the men who was in the camp at the time of the arrests and who has a figure of 158.

Muslim traders from Kattankudy come into Batticaloa only for a few hours. Shops put up their shutters early and a 'curfew' imposed by the citizens takes over Batticaloa town.

'War surgery that was 80 percent in the early stages of the conflict is almost non-existent now' says a doctor from medicines sans frontiers (the French medical team) that provides a dedicated Humanitarian service in the North-East region.

Most of the security check points on the road to Vavuniya have also been dismantled these past weeks. Like Batticaloa only a few shops open for business. Owners are still caught up in the uncertainty of the war across the border.

To Sarogini Sithamparapillai, the young electrical foreman in Vavuniya, restoring the electrical supply to the

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MAKING A VIRTUE OF BRUTALITY

– *S.Sivasegaram*

Mass liberation movements cannot be secret societies which are not answerable to the people whom they claim to represent. The bane of the Tamil liberation struggle has been that the leading organisations hitherto have avoided mass politics and denied the people a role in making decisions even in matters which directly concern their lives. Intellectuals have a great responsibility towards the development of a healthy and progressive social outlook... Those who not only defend, but also make a virtue of brutality do great harm to the Tamil national struggle and to the social and moral values which the Tamil people cherish and take great pride in.

Oppression tends to brutalise the victim. The struggle for liberation cannot be plain brutal response to oppression and needs to be directed against brutalisation too. Failure to distinguish between the principal enemy and potential friends results in the weakening of the struggle and isolation from forces which can be helpful. Recent events in the North and the East have caused dismay to many supporters and sympathisers of the liberation struggle of the Tamil people and isolated the forces of liberation from potential allies. Feuds between rival movements have done little good to any of them and the real beneficiaries seem to be the very forces against whom the struggle should have been directed. We have witnessed an absurd situation where rival movements switched alliances to spite each other, with each accusing the other of treachery and deceit. The truth is that all the leading movements have displayed great hunger for power and have, to varying degrees, subjected the needs of the people to sectarian interests.

The assumption that Tamil liberation is the same as the setting up of an independent sovereign state of Tamil Eelam has led to the fallacy that the struggle for Tamil liberation implies unqualified support for a particular movement. Some even assume that an opponent or critic of that movement is an enemy of the liberation struggle and of the Tamil people and therefore a traitor who deserves to be eliminated. Such parochial and arrogant attitudes have been responsible for the killing of a number of innocent civilians whose apparent crime was to seem to be critical of one movement or another. None of the major liberation movements is above blame in this respect although some have been particularly notorious. These grievous mistakes have exacted a large price from the liberation struggle by dividing the people and strengthening the enemy. Today no movement is able to inspire the Tamil masses to struggle and what the people seem to want most is shelter from the ongoing battle. The attitude of rival movements towards the current situation is unhealthy and that of some intellectuals who claim to support one movement or another is no more commendable. Such attitude on the part of some Tamil intellectuals, many of whom live abroad, is not entirely new and is reflected in their response to events, to criticism and even to difference of opinion.

When the massacre of innocent civilians took place in Anuradhapura in 1985, very few Tamil nationalist intellectuals expressed any criticism of that act of brutality. In fact, there was more concern among some about possible Sinhala backlash than about the shame it brought on the just struggle of the Tamil people. I remember asking an intellectual who was not associated with the movement responsible for the massacre but involved in a broad front organisation seeking to unite some of the rival groups in London to issue a statement strongly condemning the killings. He agreed in principle but failed to act. There were, of course, others who even saw a positive side to the butchery and justified it as a great tactical move. This horror was followed in 1986 by the killing of over a hundred young men and boys belonging to the TELO and, again, the response of several intellectuals was heavily dependent on the political sympathies of the individuals concerned. There were a number of other such deplorable incidents including the Colombo bus-stand bombing, the explosion at the Madras airport, which was of course a sad blunder, and the killing of innocent Sinhalese villagers in the North and the East which deserved to be denounced in the strongest possible terms by all genuine supporters of the Tamil cause but were not. This should be seen against the prevalent view in the mid-80s that the support that an organisation enjoyed among overseas Tamils was dependent on the number of Sinhalese it killed.

Attacks on Muslims have occurred from time to time and various movements have been accused, but none matched the recent killings in the mosque either in scale or in horror, and, despite vehement denials by the suspected Tamil movement and the counterclaim that the operation was organised by the Sri Lankan armed forces, few Muslims believe the denials. The rift between the Tamil and the Muslim communities in the East has never been deeper than at present. The very fact that the Muslims are willing to believe that the Tamils are responsible for the mosque killings deserves serious attention. The liberation struggle had the potential to bring the two communities together against Sinhala chauvinist oppression, but it failed. The attitude of the Tamil nationalist leadership towards the Muslims since the years preceding independence from British rule has not been very helpful. Claims that Muslims were part of the Tamil nation have been made without consideration of the views of the Muslims and solutions sought by the Tamil nationalist leadership for the national problem failed to take into account the just fears and suspicions of the Muslims about Tamil domination. The claim that the Tamil nationalist leadership had the right to speak on behalf of the Muslims, regardless of the views of the Muslims on the subject, was arrogant and the demand that the Muslims should be part of a Tamil dominated state or autonomous region without any guarantee of their right to withdraw from such a union was totally unjust. While it is true that it is in the interest of the Muslims and Tamils to unite within one regional administration, the interest of neither community is served when the views of the Muslim minority are not respected.

There are some who are of the view that the plight of the Muslims and Sinhalese within a Tamil dominated state is no concern of the Tamil liberation struggle, and some who would even go to the extent of claiming that non-Tamil minorities within the Tamil territories who cannot accept the diktat of the Tamil nationalist leadership should be encouraged to leave. These views run contrary to the very spirit of the just struggle of the Tamil people for liberation and to defend their right to self determination.

Killing of individuals for political reasons started in the North with that of Alfred Duraiappa and the lack of a firm response to that murder from the Tamil nationalist leadership of that day was seen as a sign of encouragement by some of the militants. Other killings followed, again without condemnation by the Tamil leadership. (In fact, when certain leaders of the TULF were killed in subsequent years by a militant group, an important leader of the TULF lamented that these people who served the Tamil cause well had been killed while certain 'traitors' had been spared). It did not take long for political killings to become an

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epidemic. Persons who filed nominations to contest District Council elections in 1982 were threatened or killed and this became a pattern during subsequent elections. Killings were not restricted to politicians and armed personnel, and soon government officials and social workers who refused to be cooperative with one movement or another too fell victim to the whims and fancies of young men carrying guns in the names of these movements. What was shameful about the attitude of some intellectuals was that, not only did they fail to denounce the crimes but also tried to justify them. Recent correspondence in publications in the west such as the *Tamil Times* bear testimony to this.

I remember in particular the crude response of one correspondent to a letter by David Selbourne, a great supporter of the Tamil liberation cause, denouncing the killers of Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran. David Selbourne appears to have treated that pile of abuse with the contempt it deserved by ignoring it. Several Sinhalese intellectuals and leaders who have consistently defended the rights of the Tamil people have been abused for their plea against secession and for expressing the view that the settlement of the national question should include disarming the militants. While one need not agree with some of their views, one has to be able to distinguish friend from foe. Interestingly, the very individuals who abused the more sympathetic Sinhalese chose to ignore the killings in the South and sang the praise of Mr. Premadasa, who did not take long to turn on the Tamils of the North and East. There have also been several instances where people have justified atrocities committed by one organisation by comparison with those by its rivals and on the basis of precedents. They do not, however, bother to find out whether liberation organisations elsewhere take pride in attacking civilians and their supporters and bend over backwards to defend every act of inhumanity committed in the name of the struggle.

Attacks on civilians and abuse of basic human and democratic rights by liberation movements are largely ignored by their supporters abroad. It was disappointing to read communications pleading for unqualified support for the LTTE in view of its struggle against the government. The concern for these people is understandable and their position is possibly different from that of some others who believe that the LTTE should be supported unconditionally simply because they have become the dominant force in Tamil politics, but it is only one delicate step away from the view that denies the Tamil people the democratic right to dissent and brands every person who differs from that view a traitor or an enemy. I certainly do not share the view that the LTTE deserves to be defeated or humiliated in its struggle against the government and strongly disapprove the activities of some individuals and organisations to settle scores with the LTTE by cooperating with the government in its war against the Tamil people on the pretext of fighting the LTTE. It is wrong for those who criticised the LTTE for collaborating with the government to fight the IPKF and its allies to do precisely that to avenge their humiliation. The choice for the Tamil people cannot simply be narrowed to one between cooperation with the government and unqualified support for the LTTE. This apparent lack of choice seems to be the product of the kind of political shortsightedness which ailed Tamil nationalist politics since its early days. It was this shortsightedness which made the Tamil nationalist leadership portray the entire Sinhala population as its enemy and refuse to recognise glaring differences between the most reactionary section of the Sinhala chauvinists and the progressive forces among the Sinhalese. The liberation struggle in its early stages appeared to generate some degree of enlightenment which was soon swamped by the narrow nationalism of the class which dominated Tamil politics. The brutalisation of the Tamil intellectuals too may find its origins in this political outlook.

Is it not time that we reviewed some of the past assumptions that have determined the course of the Tamil national struggle? Nothing can be sacrosanct in the struggle for a free society and it is through repeated questioning and criticism that a struggle makes progress. Failing to question will lead to stagnation and decay.

Some important issues concern the desire of the Tamil people for self determination. What form of self determination did the Tamil people want in the past? Which section of the Tamil-speaking population in Sri Lanka can the Tamil nationalist leadership truly claim to represent? Was there ever a clear mandate for secession? Even if there was one, do the people still want it? Should not they have an opportunity to consider possible options? Does the Tamil nation have an existence outside the expressed wishes of the Tamil people? Is Tamil Eelam an end in itself? Does the end justify the means? Should the Tamil people once again allow a regional power to impose a 'solution' on the Tamil nationality? Can the Tamil national struggle afford to ignore the struggle in the South against oppression? Are not questions of human and democratic rights in every part of the island matters of concern to the Tamil nationality? Should not the struggle for Tamil national liberation be linked with the struggle for equality and justice? These questions have become all the more important today since the struggle of the Tamil people in the North and the East has become one for civil and human rights and mere survival in many instances. It is time that any movement which claims to fight for the Tamil people recognizes that people are more precious than sectarian interests and quest for power.

Anyone who is serious about the task of restoring the basic rights of the Tamil people and winning their just demands will recognize the need for unity among all forces that can be united against the oppressor. It is unrealistic and foolish to depend on external forces to solve the problem facing the Tamil nationality while finding every possible excuse to divide the forces which could and should be united in struggle. Such unity can be achieved only through the democratisation of the struggle and encouraging the Tamil masses to have a greater say in the conduct of the struggle. It also requires a spirit of mutual tolerance and understanding and the accommodation of divergent views in the interest of greater unity. Mass liberation movements cannot be secret societies which are not answerable to the people whom they claim to represent. The bane of the Tamil liberation struggle has been that the leading organisations hitherto have avoided mass politics and denied the people a role in making decisions even in matters which directly concern their own lives.

Intellectuals have a great responsibility towards the development of a healthy and progressive social outlook. They can also play a valuable role in the popularisation and democratisation of the struggle by participation in civilised debate and discussion and by supporting resistance to every form of intimidation. Those who not only defend but make a virtue of brutality do great harm to the Tamil national struggle and to the social and moral values which the Tamil people cherish and take great pride in.

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ROLE OF THE STATE IN THE ETHNIC CONFLICT OF SRI LANKA

– Urmila Phadnis –

Professor, South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

(Continued from last issue)

V

This scenario can be traced to mass politics asserting itself in the electoral arena. The first rub of such a Sinhala-Tamil divide had come in the promulgation of Sinhala only as the official language in 1956 instead of the parity of Tamil and Sinhala as had been promised by the two dominantly Sinhalese parties namely, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) only to be abnegated later by both. Such a move symbolised a reassertion of the Sinhalese nationalism and, a new dignity to its Sinhalese educated middle strata with race, religion and language providing a strong conglomerate to such a Sinhala consciousness marked by a thrust on its distinctiveness as well as its pre-eminence vis-a-vis other minority communities.[17]

While the Burghers, in view of their small numbers found greener pastures in other countries in the wake of such Sinhalese-Buddhist thrust of the Sri Lankan State, the Muslims appeared to reconcile with such a situation. Besides, dispersed as they were all over the island (except in the eastern region) and with business and trade being the major avocation of a large number of them, the linguistic-cultural assertion of the majority community did not create a major crisis for them.

However, for the Tamils, particularly Sri Lankan Tamils of the north, the promulgation of the Sinhalese only as the official language was perceived as catastrophic for subjective as much as objective reasons. Denial of Tamil the official status was perceived as a slur to their language – one of the oldest languages – as much as to their linguistic-cultural distinctiveness. Besides, the status of the Tamils as an advantaged community hinged on their high share in governmental jobs as well as some of the other prestigious professions like law and medicine. In the Sri Lankan situation, with state emerging as the largest employer, they feared that with the replacement of Sinhalese over English as the official language, their employment prospects would shrink, more so because political spoils system, as elsewhere, was in any case bound to restrict their chances. That their fears were well-founded was evident from their shrinking numbers in government jobs.[18]

Added to this was the Sri Lankan Tamils sense of grievance regarding education, colonisation and regional autonomy which got increasingly intensive over the decades. Thus, in the realm of education, with the mother tongue being the mode of communication from school to the University level after 1960, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the university educated Tamil youth to cope with the old confidence in the job market.

Worse still, in 1970, soon after coming to power, the United Front Government decided to replace merit as the criteria for admission by a system of weightage which worked in favour of Sinhalese students. It introduced a system of standardisation which specified a system of credits which were higher for students writing in Tamil and lower in the case of Sinhalese aspirants.

The ultimate result of the quotas and standardisation system was a progressive decline of Tamil students in the science based courses in which earlier, they had done very well.[19] Though the situation was ameliorated to some extent during the UNP regime, the discriminatory aspects of the SLFP policies were deeply etched in the Tamil psyche.

Alongside educational policies, the land settlement or colonisation policies of the earlier governments were perceived with mistrust. It was maintained by the Tamil leadership that the Sinhalese dominated state's land settlement policy was a device to dilute the demographic character of the Tamil homeland in the north and east.[20]

Last but not the least was the issue of regional autonomy. Time and again, the Tamils had sought regional autonomy as a structural mechanism to ameliorate their grievance as well as to provide a certain autonomy in governance at provincial levels. However, since 1956, even when these efforts were made by the ruling regimes, they tended to be abortive because both the UNP and the SLFP – as and when in opposition – spared no efforts to cash in on Sinhalese Buddhist populist sentiments, with the plea being that any effort towards federalisation signalled a danger to national unity. The abrogation of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact in 1957 on the regional councils in the north and east, the abortive debate on the formation of District Council during the 60s and 70s reiterated the same story.[21]

Though the induction of Provincial Councils in 1988 was arrived at it is noteworthy that the major opposition party – the SLFP – boycotted these elections. The Provincial Councils even when established in the northeastern region could hardly be functional. In the North-Eastern Province for instance, the issues involved were not merely that of delineating the jurisdiction of the Centre and the Province but that of the credibility and confidence of one in the other. Thus, though creating the Provincial Council in somewhat exceptional circumstances, the state leadership could hardly harmonise its activities with the Provincial Council and *vice-versa*.[22]

VI

During the initial five years of the UNP regime (1977-83), its policies towards Tamils appeared to be a mix of cooption and coercion, with coercion having an edge over its promise of 'national reconciliation'. The reasons for the government's inability to contain the Tamil militancy were partly because of contending perceptions for a solution within its own party and partly due to the pressures and pulls from the major opposition party – the SLFP – trying, as the UNP had done in the past – to make political capital out of the ethnic issue through its political intransigence and at times ambivalence. Also, the intensity of the Tamil militants' sense of grievance was presumably inadequately appraised by the ruling regime despite repeated warnings on this point by the TULF in parliament which, had emerged in an unenviable position after 1977 elections. With a bare 18 seats in the legislature of 168 members, it emerged as the largest opposition party. With Eelam being its major election slogan, the TULF could hardly perform the old oppositional role in an era of new types of militancy and violence in which the state-initiated and sponsored violence increasingly had got deadlocked with the violence of the Tamil militants.

While the UNP constitution of 1978 did ascribe Tamil the status of 'national language', it still fell short of the earlier demand of the Tamil federalists for its parity with Sinhala as the official language. Besides, its proposal for the formation of District Development Councils, providing a certain degree of regional autonomy was such as to rupture the TULF with its youth wing perceiving it as a subversive step vis-a-vis the Eelam. In due course the moderate Tamils were sidetracked by the militant Eelamists.

Moreover, violence and counter violence took an ethnic turn in 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983. While the communal violence of 1977 had engulfed large parts of the country, in 1979 it

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was principally in the Northern Province. The insurgents' hit and run activities coupled with bank robberies resulted in the proscription of the Tamil Tigers in 1978, the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1979 and the promulgation of emergency in Jaffna in 1979. During the insurgency, the high-handedness of police and armed forces kept the ethnic cauldron simmering. And though the major explosion came in 1983, by this time, the dialogue between Colombo and the TULF had virtually broken down. The military operations in Jaffna had become increasingly harsher with a sudden swoop on the civilians, arrest of young men and even discriminate burning of places (like Jaffna library) and burning of property particularly when a segment of them was incensed by the terrorist killings of their compatriots.[23]

The triggering of the anti-Tamil riots on July 20, 1983 after the ambush and killing of 13 Sinhalese soldiers is a story too well known and well documented, highlighting the indifference of the police and armed forces on the one hand and the complicity of a segment of the ruling party in the killings, looting and burnings of the Tamils and their property.[24]

The ferocity of the Sinhalese chauvinist elements with tacit approval of the state apparatus reached such proportions that the entire Tamil leadership found itself with no option but to flee the north and northeastern provinces and seek refuge in Tamil Nadu. Moreover, with the government simultaneously intensifying its military operations, thousands of refugees also sought refuge in Tamil Nadu.

This was the prelude for the emergence of the India factor in the domestic Sri Lankan ethnic strife. Initially, New Delhi had watched with cautious concern the inability of Colombo to find a negotiated settlement of the Tamil Question with the Sri Lankan Tamil leadership. But the events of 1983 were such that the government of India could no longer remain a passive spectator because of the arousal of the Tamil sentiments in Tamil Nadu.

The immediate impetus of Delhi to act was the July 23rd massacre of Tamils in Colombo and elsewhere in the southern parts of the island. There was a public outcry in Tamil Nadu against these killings with an implicit prodding on the Government of India that it should intervene militarily in Sri Lanka as it had done in the case of erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971. Far from doing so however, the Indian effort was to make an attempt to prevail upon the Government in Sri Lanka not to seek a military solution but to secure a politically negotiated settlement.

It needs to be noted here that while India publicly maintained its stance that it stood for the territorial integrity of the island-state and was against the secession of the Tamil provinces, it had not refrained from encouraging the separatist elements with material support besides providing sanctuary to the extremist elements in Tamil Nadu to continue their insurgency activities with the major premise being that the Sri Lankan Government's moves on the security–foreign policy front were prejudicial to its security concerns.[25] Added to the India factor was also the support which the militants received from the Tamil expatriates[26] all of which resulted in a much greater resource endowment to the struggle for Eelam than had been hitherto.

It is in the totality of this complex situation that the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka has to be evaluated.

VII

This phase of Indo-Sri Lankan relations began when the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, took the initiative of getting in touch with the then Sri Lankan President Mr. Jayewardene with the offer of her good offices to help Colombo find a negotiated settlement of the Tamil Question. This was followed by a visit of her personal envoy, G. Parthasarathy to Colombo, and the convening of the All Party Conference to evolve a national consensus on the Tamil Question. This however proved abortive as also the subsequent attempts.

An explanation for this failure has to be found on the one hand in the increasing militancy of the Sinhalese chauvinist elements and on the other, the equally intransigent approach of the Tamil militants particularly the LTTE, to a negotiated settlement. Incidentally, the main motivation behind both the Sinhalese and the Tamil extremists was that any negotiated settlement would subvert their stated anti-systemic objectives.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan Government went ahead with its offensive against the Tamil insurgents and though it did succeed to some extent in clearing the Eastern Province, the stronghold of the LTTE which was the Northern Province continued to be beyond the reach of the security forces and Colombo's writ hardly ran there. With such advantage as the security forces could gain in the Eastern Province the Sri Lankan Government decided to concentrate its forces against the Northern Province which entailed heavy civilian casualties, particularly in Jaffna. The government had also imposed an economic blockade in early 1987 which did cause hardship to the civilians. This was the stage in which the government of India's military involvement began with the symbolic air dropping of supplies to the Jaffna peninsula flouting Sri Lankan airspace.[27]

Whether it was so intended or not, President Jayewardene seemed to have taken this as a signal of India's intention to come to the rescue of the Tamils militarily. Forthwith Mr. Jayewardene appears to have considered it to be more prudent to come to an understanding with India partly because of his apprehensions of a coup against his regime in Sri Lanka itself and partly because of his fears of India's intentions as well as the unwillingness of extra-regional powers to get involved in Sri Lanka's ethnic strife partly because of the possible repercussions it might have in their relations with India. Instructively in this regard there was a marked tendency on the part of both the super powers to let India handle the situation.[28]

This was the background to the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord which the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed with President Jayewardene in Colombo on July 29, 1987. Under the Accord, India agreed to secure arms surrender from the Tamil militants while the Sri Lankan Government agreed to take steps not only to meet the Tamil aspirations for self-government but also tacitly to concede to the demand of the concept of a Tamil homeland, namely, an amalgamated single unit of Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The immediate aftermath of the Accord did not seem to be conducive to the termination of the conflict between the Sri Lankan and the Tamil militants. On the one hand, the LTTE refused to go beyond a formal surrender of arms and on the other it generated a Sinhalese Buddhist backlash with Mr. Jayewardene's Prime Minister, Mr. Premadasa, himself abstaining from the signing ceremony of the Accord. Thus, if the Indian Government found itself unable to fulfil its commitment to disarm the militants, except by initiating military action against the LTTE, Mr. Jayewardene found that the Accord had fuelled further the conflagration which had been ignited by the JVP by touching the Sinhalese Buddhist sentiments on the raw of a national offence committed by the presence of foreign troops on the Sri Lankan soil.[29]

In a rather feeble attempt to head off the JVP's appeal to the Sinhalese sentiments, Mr. Jayewardene's successor, Mr. Premadasa, made the withdrawal of the IPKF one of the major issues in his presidential election campaign in 1988.

As it happened, a change of government in New Delhi and the assumption of power by the opposition National Front, which had questioned the wisdom of Mr. Gandhi having committed Indian troops, to Sri Lanka helped Mr. Premadasa to redeem his electoral pledge and the IPKF was duly withdrawn from the island in March 1990.

Not illogically, there was a congruence of immediate objectives between Mr. Premadasa and the LTTE which had been fighting the IPKF as an 'army of occupation' in the Tamil homeland. After a brief interlude of unofficial contacts starting in April 1988 the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE leadership decided to come round to negotiations on finding a peaceful settlement. There were several rounds of formal talks lasting several months which took place in Colombo between government representatives and the LTTE leaders.

However, despite the conciliatory gestures of Colombo which included, the abrogation of the Sixth Amendment of the Constitution,[30] dissolution of the Provincial Council (which had come into being as a result of elections held under the terms of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord) and fresh provincial elections, the LTTE could not be persuaded to carry on the talks to a successful conclusion. Its leadership preferred to return to its quest for a total dominance of the Tamil areas through the resumption of its insurgency.

This quest for dominance in the past had included physical elimination of all the Tamil groups which were contesting its sole claim for power.[31] Its confrontation with Colombo on a somewhat trivial issue leading to its take over of some of the police stations brought it in direct military confrontation with the armed forces as in 1983 but with one major difference. The conciliatory gesture of Colombo had already been internationally publicised and though the Tamil political groups were sharply divided on the rationale or justification of the LTTE's confrontation with Colombo the aerial bombing by the state in the north did evoke a criticism of government action from the oppositional Sinhalese as well as Tamil parties and groups.[32]

VIII

The role of the state in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has been, in effect, a manifestation of the various facets of the structural crisis of the Sri Lankan state. Embedded in such a crisis have been two levels of class and ethnicity. Initially they seemed to be mutually reinforcing as was evident from the political coalitions and patterns of power sharing in the institutions of power and authority of the state by the elite of the two communities.

In the post-independence era, with mass politics gaining ascendancy and the Sinhalese Buddhist lower middle strata, perceiving itself as deprived as well as discriminated against vis-a-vis the alien as well as minority group interests, had succeeded in pushing Sri Lankan politics to endow it a majoritarian thrust through the agency of Party politics. Electoral dynamics were such that the two major political parties became increasingly partisan and avowedly moving towards the Sinhalese Buddhist ideology as the ideology of Sri Lankan nation and state.

This was viewed with serious concern by the elite of the most forward community for identity assertion as well as group mobilisation to safeguard its interests. However, identity, as in the other cases, has been a significant but not a sufficient requisite to evoke ethnicity. It was the interest in power sharing and its management that prompted the power elite of the minority community to mobilise an already politically conscious community by choosing, selecting and standardising select symbols for its identity assertion and focus a sense of grievance vis-a-vis the reference group i.e., the Sinhalese.

Ironically, the ethnicisation of politics and politicisation of ethnicity was operative in a manner as to make the majority-minority relationship virtually a zero-sum game, particularly since the 70s when the vernacular educated lower middle strata of the Tamils belonging to some of the emergent castes like karaiyars decided to revolt against not only the high caste and upper class based Tamil leadership but also against the state power-structure as the JVP had done earlier.

With an overheated polity, a maldeveloped economy and a multi-ethnic society, the earlier equilibrium of Sri Lankan state – of mediating competing interests through alignments or amalgamation became increasingly tenuous. Contending perspectives, conflicting perceptions and misperceptions marked the increasing chasm. On the one end of this continuum lay the perspective of the Sri Lankan (i.e., Sinhalese Buddhist) 'nation' in siege and on the other end emerged the perspective of Eelam – the vision of a separate Tamil state.

In such a clash of identity and pluralism there is no doubt that the majority dominated regimes adopted measures which could hardly mitigate the Tamil sense of grievance and even if they did to some extent, they were hardly implemented. Besides, in the wake of the violent activities of the Tamil secessionists, the government's military measures were hardly synchronised with political measures to alleviate some of the Tamil demands. The military content of external inputs on both the sides exacerbated the cleavage. Thus, as regards the militants their enhanced capacity and skill to hit the state apparatus led to an increase of armed forces and an escalated defence expenditure.[33] If such escalation was inimical to the already tottering economic development of Sri Lanka, in the case of some of the militant groups, the nexus of arms with drugs imparted a pernicious angle to the ethnic strife.

Besides, whether on the Sinhalese or on the Tamil side, the phenomena of political violence has been such as to encompass particularly in recent years, the shadowy extra legal vigilante groups on the Sinhalese side. The subterranean currents of political violence have been equally strong leading to insurgent, guerrilla like warfare at random, not to speak of the open war being waged at this juncture in the north between the state forces and the LTTE.

Unless and until the state policies and measures are radically restructured and politically reoriented, the Sri Lankan forces in the north may at best have a pyrrhic victory. In this respect, the major challenge of President Premadasa's regime continues to be that of bringing the Tamil in the mainstream politics in order to recreate their stakes in the Sri Lankan political system. Eelam has not only been an ideology but a movement for liberation for which Tamils – young and old – have lost their lives and continue to do so. The edge of the struggle can be blunted only through political solution and not through military recourse, a point on which most of the Sri Lankans agree – but find themselves hapless to get it effected.

Besides, with the majority-minority, relationship cleaved further during the past decade, the bridging of the ethnic divide as has been stated earlier, can be brought about only in the overall gamut of the crisis of the state on the one hand and imperatives of peace on the other. It is noteworthy, that during the past few years the Muslim community in Sri Lanka too has felt deeply aggrieved and insecure as perhaps never before during the post colonial era.

At present, the state machinery is hardly operative in the north and is limping in the east. The first prerequisite thus of the mitigation of ethnic divide has to be the need for action for restoration of law and order and civil authority.

Going by the experience of the other Provincial Councils, the Provincial administrative set-up seems to be a going concern. To what extent and in what way can Colombo help ensure the installation of a functioning institutional structure is going to be its major challenge. So is the effectivity of devolution, taking into consideration the lacunae therein as repeated by the first chief minister of the region, Varatharaja Perumal.

Equally significant measures for an enduring peace in the island are the devices for greater inter-ethnic group interaction. In this respect, the promised quota system for the minorities will have to be worked out with cir-

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cumspection lest it may intensify Jaffna-Colombo cleavage and may not, in the long run, foster the majority-minority harmony either.

Some of the recommendations of the youth commission, highlighting the damage due to political interference and spoils system, the mismatch between employment and education, the Sinhalese-Tamil divide as a result of linguistic dualism, the racial bias in the text books, particularly the Sinhalese ones, the need to harmonise values of pluralism over identity are no doubt commendable but in the civil society of Sri Lanka afflicted by fear of the known/unknown adversary and uncertainties regarding the future, the laws of the jungle seem to attract the youth more than the yearnings for a just and peaceful political order. This is particularly so with the Tamil (and to some extent Sinhalese youth) who have been virtually grown in an environment of alienation and aggression with the collective manifestation being political violence not merely vis-a-vis Sinhala but also Tamils.

Not only this, the events during the past years – violation of human rights, 'disappearances' and killings of political dissenters – connote a disturbing trend with the state increasingly assuming the features of a 'National Security State' as has happened in a number of Latin American countries. The comment of the Civil Rights Movement in Sri Lanka are pertinent in this respect: the state needs to be particularly circumspect in the use of its coercive power. 'If the state acts or is popularly believed to act, with the same degree of contempt for law and human values as its adversaries, then it undermines its own moral, ethical and legal basis'.[34]

With the Non-Governmental Organisations in Sri Lanka being under continuous pressures from various quarters, the 'peace constituency' in Sri Lanka needs to be strengthened through collective support and efforts of similar organisations abroad. But more significantly, in such a task it appears to have an ambivalent if not antithetical relationship with some of the state institutions which needs rectification.

Will the state leadership rise to the occasion to fulfil its promise of 'national conciliation, consensus and compromise'? This remains a daunting question which only its performance will vindicate in the years to come.

(Concluded)

17. For a general discussion on this point see various papers in James Manor, ed., **Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis** (London: Croom and Helm, 1984): Social Scientist Association, **Ethnicity and Social Change in Sri Lanka** (Colombo: Social Scientist Association, 1984), and Kumari Jayawardena, **Ethnic and Class Conflicts in Sri Lanka** (Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, Centre for Social Analysis, 1986).

18. For empirical data on this point see W. Schwarz. **Tamils of Sri Lanka** (London: The Minority Rights Groups Ltd., report No. 25, 1983), p.13, Charles Abeysekera, 'Ethnic Representation in the Higher Civil Services' in Social Scientist Association, **Ethnicity and Social Change in Sri Lanka,** n.17, pp.179-195; S.W.R. de Samansinghe, 'Ethnic Representation in Central Government Employment and Sinhalese – Tamil Relations in Sri Lanka' in Robert B. Goldman and A.J. Wilson, eds., **From Independence to Statehood: Managing Ethnic Conflict in Five African and Asian States** (London: Frances Pinter, 1984), pp.173-184 and Chelvadurai Manogaran, **Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka** (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987). pp.127-137.

19. C.R. de Silva, 'The Politics of University Admissions: A Review of Some Aspects of the Admission Policy in Sri Lanka, 1971-78', **Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences,** vol.1, no.2, December 1978, pp.85-112.

20. Manogaran, n.18, pp.78-114.

21. Ibid., pp.153-165. Also see Bruce Matthews, 'District Development Councils in Sri Lanka', **Asian Survey,** vol.22, no.1, November 1982, pp.1117-34.

22. In fact, a number of position papers prepared by the north-eastern government on implementation of the Security coordination group during September-December are revealing in this respect. Also in a statement dated January 1990, the Chief Minister of northeastern province A. Varatharaja Perumal had maintained that the devolution process in the northeast had hardly had a take-off because of the intransigence of Colombo. An additional political component in this context was Colombo's parleys with the LTTE since April 1989 which had been waging war with the IPKF since September 1987 and had described the EPRLF dominated government in the region as 'Indian stooges'.

23. For details see Virginia A. Leary, **Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka.** Report of a Commission in Sri Lanka in July-August 1981, on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists. With a supplement by the ICJ staff for the period 1981-83 (Geneva, International Commission of Jurists, August 1983); Paul Sieghart, **Sri Lanka – A Mounting Tragedy of Errors** (ICJ Report, 1984); 'Sri Lanka – Racism and Authoritarian State', **Race and Class,** vol.26, no.1, 1984.

24. See for instance Gananath Obeysekera, 'Political Violence and the future of Democracy in Sri Lanka', in Committee for Rational Development. **Sri Lanka: The Ethnic Conflict Myths, Realities and Perspectives** (Delhi: Navarang, 1984). pp.87-89. Also see the various issues of Logos, a Quarterly journal published by the Centre of Society and Religion, Colombo.

25. See various articles in Shelton U. Kodikara, ed., **Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987** (Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, Sri Devi Printers, 1989). Also see P. Sahadevan, **India and the Tamil Problem in Sri Lanka, 1965-1985.** M.Phil. Dissertation, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1986. Typed.

26. For a brief account of the activities of the Tamil expatriates vis-a-vis the Eelamist movement see Sudha Ramachandran, **Tamil Insurgency in Sri Lanka,** M.Phil. Dissertation, Centre for South, Central, South-East Asian and South-West Pacific Studies, JNU, New Delhi, 1989. Typed.

27. For a background to India's role in the ethnic conflict during 1983-87 see Kodikara, n.26. Also see, P. Venkateshwara Rao, 'Ethnic Conflict in India – India's Role and Perception', **Asian Survey,** vol.28, no.4, April 1988, pp.419-436; R. Premadas and S.W.R. de Samarasinghe; 'Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict – The Indo-Lanka Peace Accord', **Asian Survey,** vol.28, no.6, June 1988, pp.676-689 and Dagmar Hellman-Rajanayagam, 'The Tamil Militants Before the Accord and After', **Pacific Affairs,** vol.61, no.4, 1989, pp.603-619.

28. See J.R. Jayewardene's interview in **Lanka Guardian,** vol.13, no.5, July 1, 1990, pp.3-4.

29. For the linkages of the ascendancy of the JVP with the presence of the IPKF see Bryan Pfaffenberger, 'Sri Lanka in 1987 – Indian Intervention and Resurgence of the JVP', **Asian Survey,** vol.28, no.2, February 1988, pp.137-147; Shelton U. Kodikara, 'The Continuing Crisis in Sri Lanka – the JVP, the Indian Troops and Tamil Politics', **Asian Survey,** vol.29, no.7, July 1989, pp.716-724. Also see Bruce Matthews, 'Sinhala Cultural and Buddhist Patriotic Organisation in Contemporary Sri Lanka', **Pacific Affairs,** vol.61, no.4, 1989, pp.620-633 and Bruce Matthews, 'The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the Politics of Underground in Sri Lanka', **Round Table,** no.312, 1989, pp.425-439.

30. Enacted in 1983 in the wake of the ethnic conflict the amendment requires MPs and other high government officials to take an oath of allegiance, forswearing separatism and pledging for the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

31. The LTTE's strategies in tackling its adversaries has led to a fratricidal war going back to shootout between the LTTE and PLOTE (People's Liberation of Tamil Eelam) leaders Pirbhakaran and Maheshwaran in Pondi Bazar at Madras in 1982, the LTTE's attack on TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization) and more recently, the killings of the TULF leaders in Colombo in early this year, the shooting of the EPRLF (Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front) MP, Sam Tambimuthu in May in Colombo and the virtual wiping out of the EPRLF leadership in June 1990 including its Secretary General, K. Padmanabha.

32. For a brief account of the LTTE's action on a trivial issue see 'How the Miniwar began', **Ceylon Daily News,** 13 June 1990. Also see Mervyn de Silva's articles in **Lanka Guardian,** Ibid., pp.3-4 and vol.13, no.9, September 1, 1990, pp.3-4. For the text of the statement of six opposition parties see Ibid., p.5.

33. In 1970-71 for instance, the defence expenditure was about Rs.362 million accounting for a miniscule percentage of the budgetary expenditure. This was virtually doubled in 1978. During 1987-88 it shot up to Rs.11 billion accounting for 16.4 per cent of its national budget. During 1988-89, with the IPKF's operations in the North and Eastern provinces it was reduced to about 9 billion, to shoot up again in 1990, particularly after the IPKF's withdrawal and an additional defence grant of Rs.5 billion added in June 1990 to its earlier estimates of about Rs.10 billion, accounting thereby for about 15% of its total budgetary expenditure. The hike was accompanied with the increase in the army, navy and air force personnel alongside the acquisition of sophisticated equipment to contain the Tamil insurgents. For details see Vikram Simha Rao, 'Militarisation of Sri Lanka: A Tabular Study', **Strategic Analysis,** vol.11, no.12, March 1987, pp.1447-60; Mayan Vije, **Militarisation in Sri Lanka** (London: Tamil Information Centre, 1986), pp.21-26. Also see for figures in 1987-1989, **Economic Review,** vol.14, no.12, March 1989, Table 1, p.3. For 1990 figures see **Hindustan Times,** 26 June 1990 and 4 July 1990.

34. Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka, 'Continuing Violence', document 01/12/89; Amnesty International. **Sri Lanka: Summary of Human Rights Concern,** February 1990 (London: Amnesty International, 1990). also, see News from **Asia Watch,** March 8, 1990, regarding the alleged complicity of police officials in the killing of journalist Richard de Zoysa.

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In Colombo as I promised.
I hope you are happier in Wales
Than you were in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is not really a hell,
But was really a Paradise
For a long time in her history,
Not only for her people
But also for the foreign visitors

Sri Lanka is beautiful
Her mountains and rivers
Her forests and valleys
Her birds and animals
Her mornings and evenings
Her nights and noons
Are still beautiful.

At the age of yours
We – your father and your uncles
Your mother and your aunts
Were enjoying the winds and waters
The sand and the dust of this land
We were free and were going freely
Wherever we wanted

Now the times have changed
We can't move freely,
People are afraid of everything
People are missing
We lost one of our fine brothers
You lost one of your uncles.

Now we hear not the songs of the birds
Not the sounds of the music
But the sound of the gun.
Now we see not the beauty of the land
But the terror of death.
The time you were here was such
Our peaceful Paradise has become
Temporarily a hell.

My dear children
As you know
There will be a dawn
And the bright sun
And I hope to meet you here again
In a real Paradise.

– From your Uncle in Jaffna

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Sri Lanka's Human Rights Record Under Fire

A four-member investigative mission comprising two Members of the European Parliament, Christine Oddy and Alex Smith, a Belgian lawyer Bernad Dewitt and a Dutch lawyer Corjan Schoorl into the question of widespread violation of human rights visited Sri Lanka from 27 October to 4 November.

The following are extracts from the mission's report:

In order to obtain the widest possible view of the current situation in human rights, we met Members of Parliament across the political spectrum, the State Minister of Defence, the Army Commander, and representatives of a number of human rights organisations.

We met about 250 relatives of disappeared people and interviewed about 50 families. We have obtained at least 1500 written documented cases of people who have disappeared. Conclusions and findings in this report are restricted to information which was verifiable by verbal testimony or written report. Names and details of address have been omitted to protect the people involved and their relatives.

FINDINGS

Reports were received of people who have been taken and their bodies later discovered often burned or mutilated. Other people were taken into custody and disappeared after release from custody. In many cases, people have disappeared without any trace. Families seeking information about their relatives from the police station receive no information and are still waiting to hear.

Various estimates we have received suggest that at least 60,000 people disappeared in the South of Sri Lanka since 1987. This represents about one in every 250 of the population. This excludes the North and East of Sri Lanka. During our stay, we received reports of continuing disappearances, for example between 20 and 50 per week in the Kandy area since 1990.

A large number of reports were received alleging direct or indirect involvement of the police and armed forces. Sometimes, it appeared that vigilante forces operating on behalf of armed forces and police took away relatives at night. Sometimes police in uniform, or police in plain clothes but known to be police took away relatives. The Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Powers Regulations appear to be abused.

When we asked the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Army for explanations of the killings and disappearances, the Chief of Army attributed some killings to army deserters and people dismissed from the Army. The Minister of Defence admitted that there had been some excesses in the Jaffna area and during the JVP insurrection, but stated that there was a police investigation underway.

We were appalled by accounts of brutality. For example, we received one account of six boys who were publicly shot and beheaded and mutilated by police (some in uniform) in front of a bank for allegedly raiding a bank. Two boys had been in police custody at the time of the bank raid and it was, therefore, impossible for them to have taken part in the raid. In another case, a mother reported that her son had been abducted in the early hours of the morning and two days later his head was left outside her home.

In addition, we discovered many groups are restricted in their operations. For example, trade unions may not operate in the free trade zones and are intimidated if taking part in industrial action elsewhere. H.M. Ranjith disappeared after making a complaint about dangerous machinery. Lawyers are threatened who make habeas corpus applications on behalf of people who have disappeared and some lawyers have actually disappeared themselves. Journalists have to exercise extreme caution and some have disappeared as a result of publicising the human rights situation. The killing of journalist Richard de Zoysa and disappearance of Lakshman Perera, UNP municipal councillor for Mount Lavinia, co-authors of a satirical play are significant because this raised the consciousness of the middleclass of Colombo to the gravity of the situation.

CONCLUSIONS

1) Although the army and authorities deny responsibility for the killings and disappearances, the scale is such that the State cannot be absolved from responsibility. The State has either failed in its duty to maintain law and order or has condoned the activities of the security forces.

2) The Government claims that the JVP problem was resolved in December 1989. It claims that any problems of violence are now restricted to the North and East of Sri Lanka. According to the Government, the situation is normalised in the South, but it is apparent that many killings and disappearances continue.

3) It seems clear to the delegation that many people are affected by a climate of fear and terror in the country. If this continues, it is feared that there will be retaliation and blood baths in the future.

4) Fear of economic collapse has fuelled the intimidation and the continuation of the underlying climate of violence and repression.

5) The growth of human rights groups illustrates an increasing will to find a solution to the problems of the country through peaceful and democratic means.

6) For a lasting solution, mutual trust and harmony among various communities should be promoted. No distinction should be made on the basis of caste, race, ethnicity, religion or language. Human, civil and democratic rights of all communities should be guaranteed in actual practice by the state, legal process and law and order forces in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) According to President Premadasa the latest foreign aid package to Sri Lanka shows that the Government's programmes and policies are endorsed by the whole world. (Reported in the Sri Lanka Daily News, Monday October 29th, 1990). Despite the European Council of Ministers' Declaration of October 1990 linking aid to human rights in Sri Lanka, which we welcome, we feel that there must be a real mechanism to identify progress in human rights and law and order, before any further aid packages are agreed.

2) We support the visit of the United Nations sub-committee on Disappearances and Human Rights which was accepted by the Minister of Defence for February 1991.

3) We support an investigation into disappearances by an independent body and would support the resolution of the Sri Lankan Bar Council for an enquiry by an independent Commission.

4) We wish to encourage increased cooperation between the Government and the International Red Cross.

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Continued From Page 10

district, damaged during the early weeks of the confrontation, has been a job priority. She shrugs off the conflict as not part of her job. We met Sarojini in the office of Colonel Cyril Ratnayake, the retired army officer turned Civil Affairs Officer of the district. Sarojini was discussing the repair of a water pump at the police station.

Alienating the people

Colonel Ratnayake seems to be the repository of complaints of missing persons and those taken into custody. Speaking Tamil with the same fluency as he does Sinhalese, he listens patiently to the men and women who have members of their family missing or arrested by the security forces.

It is the same sad tale. 'My husband has been taken in by the army. And I don't know where he is', wails a young woman with an infant in her arms.

We make the same plea to Col.Ratnayake that we did to officialdom and the army in other places. Take people into custody if you have to but let their families know why they are being held, and where, even if you don't let them have access to them. That seems to be the first step in building confidence in the state machinery. The fear and uncertainty is only alienating the people, driving them into the other camp.

'We are fighting a war' says a young army colonel in Vavuniya. It is a senseless war where we are killing each other'. He refuses to be drawn into a discussion of political and military solutions, but in his own way he tried to bridge the fragile lines of the communal divide.

'I was talking to an old Sinhala villager. He was about 75-years-old. I asked him whether he agreed that he had only a few more years to live. Yes, he said. I asked him then whether he believed in re-birth. Yes he answered. What if you were born a Tamil in your next birth. He looked hard at me. He understood what I was trying to get across to him'.

It was something we failed to get through to the survivors of last week's massacre at Tanthrimale. Filled with grief a young man at the community hall in Yasodagama, a few miles from where the incident occurred has his anger directed at every Tamil. 'Tigers are Tamils, so every Tamil is a Tiger'. To him there was no other reasoning. It momentarily unnerved me listening to him.

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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **THE CAR IN WHICH** EPRLF leader and Member of Parliament S. Premachandran was travelling with an escort jeep was followed by a jeep belonging to the army with armed persons who used foul and abusive language and displayed their weapons in a threatening manner on 12 October. On the following day the jeep belonging to the EPRLF Vanni MP, Mr. Kuganeswaran was hijacked in the vicinity of the Borella market in Colombo and its two occupants, the driver and the MP's bodyguard were abducted. In a statement, the EPRLF leader said that he had sufficient reasons to suspect sections of the security forces were employing terror-tactics against the EPRLF and threatened that its MPs would quit parliament if these type of incidents were repeated.

● **ALTHOUGH THE LTTE** has lost men and territory, the war would continue until Tamil Eelam was achieved. 'Bombs can destroy buildings, houses, places of worship and schools, but not moral power and courage', said LTTE leader Veluppillai Prabhakaran in a statement read out at a mass meeting held in Vadamarachchi in northern Jaffna on October 15 to commemorate the suicide of 12 LTTE leaders in October 1987. LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham told the assembled crowd that the Tigers were prepared to talk with Colombo but on their own terms. 'There can be no cease-fire. Talks can be held while the fighting goes on'.

● **AT LEAST 20 CIVILIANS** were shot dead by the Special Task Force (STF) on October 13 at Karaitivu in the eastern Amparai district after a group of prisoners escaped from a STF camp. A spokesman for the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) said that STF personnel ran amok in the Karaitivu village after a group of Muslim youths in custody at the local STF camp escaped in a waiting car and the shooting took place shortly afterwards. The residents counted 18 bodies in the village and said that two more people were shot on the periphery of the village.

● **GOVERNMENT SOURCES** claimed that the Kankesanthurai Cement Factory and the Harbour were taken back from LTTE control by security forces in a combined army-navy-airforce operation on 22 October. A Reuter report said that 30 Tigers and seven soldiers were killed in the operation. The army claimed to have captured the small town of Myliddy, the eighth town to fall since the offensive began a week earlier.

● **TWELVE SINHALA** civilians, including three women and five children, were hacked and shot to death on 23 October in the farming village of Kokabe in the Tantrimale district. About 50 armed men had stormed the village from the Medawachchiya and Mankulam jungles. Police sources accused the Tigers of being responsible for the massacre.

● **THE NEWLY FORMED** 'Mothers Front', a human rights organisation, has received more than 100,000 letters from all over the country, giving details of people missing, or presumed dead. An appeal has been made by the Front calling for details of secondary and tertiary students who have been missing since 1987. A spokesman for the Front said that there were over 2000 letters giving details of people missing in Matara alone.

● **EVEN AFTER THIS WAR** with the Tigers is over, the army will be supplemented with an additional 100,000 recruits, State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne said on 27 October addressing soldiers at the Palali Airforce base in Jaffna in the course of his tour of Vasavilan, Thellipalai and KKS Cement factory.

● **FIVE SINHALA** villagers were killed on 27 October at Suriyatenna in the Thanthrimale district. About 25 armed cadres stormed the village at about 11am as the farmers worked in the fields. Police blamed the Tigers for the attack.

● **MORE THAN 50,000** Muslims had been chased out from Mannar with only the clothes they were wearing; 15,000 of them had fled in 300 boats in a rush to keep within the deadline of 31 October issued to them by the Tigers and sought refuge at Kalpitiya (90 kilometres away towards the south), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress said in a statement.

● **SIX SOLDIERS** and eleven villagers were killed in a Tiger ambush in the early hours of 1 November in a Sinhala settlement at Weli Oya in the Trincomalee district.

● **TWO ARMY BATTALIONS** landed on the Mannar island on 1 November for a major military offensive against the LTTE. The Air Force was providing air cover, to advancing troops while naval gunboats secured the coast. Security forces were in the process of 'clearing' the island and securing it to pave the way for the return of the thousands of Muslims who had fled their homes from the region, State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne said at a news conference in Colombo.

● **ARMY SOURCES CLAIMED** that government forces had retaken control of the Mannar town while consolidating positions in the Pallimunai area; at the same time, soldiers from the Thalladi army camp had moved towards the Mannar causeway. The troops had located two LTTE offices in the Mannar Doctors' quarters and another building close to Mannar Kachcheri. An underground bunker was also located close to the Mannar railway station.

Continued From Page 6

applying the normal rules for entry into India.

'People here seem to think they have a God-given right to come to India and get upset when we try and ask them why they want to go, and how they intend to support themselves', said one official.

The High Commission receive on an average 400 applications and grants between 275 to 300 visas every day, which on a rough calculation would mean that 25 per cent of applicants are rejected.

Indian diplomats admit that young men from the north and east are screened carefully, and are asked to show that they had the means to support themselves in India. 'There is an awful lot of drug trafficking and gold smuggling going on, and we are very careful to try and screen out people who could be couriers'.

High Commission officials also point out that it is extremely easy to get a passport in Sri Lanka, and there are a number of people who have three and four passports. 'We have to be careful not to allow into India anyone who we feel might indulge in anything illegal', he said.

Local Tamils say it was far easier to get a visa to India a couple of years back, and feel that the Indian Government has definitely tightened up on Sri Lankan Tamils coming to India, especially after the killing of the EPRLF leaders in Madras by the LTTE.

Peculiar relationship: The Tamil complaints about the visa system illustrate the peculiar relationship the Jaffna man has with India. With the outbreak of the war, the Tamils of the north and east who were so critical of India when the IPKF was here, have once again started talking about 'mother India', and feel-strongly that India has a responsibility towards the Tamils in Sri Lanka which it should not abdicate. As part of this responsibility, they feel they should be allowed to travel freely to India untramelled by petty visa restrictions.

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Continued From Page 7

the 'genocidal war' launched by the Premadasa government. On the other hand, Tamil militant groups PLOTE, ENDLF, TELO and EPDP have gravitated towards the government and are reported to be helping government forces in their war effort against the LTTE. In this new development, the EPDP under the leadership of Douglas Devananda is reported to have been heavily armed by the government and the cadres of this group are closely working with the Sri Lankan army. Recently, State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne announced publicly that the government was supplying weapons to LTTE's rival Tamil groups.

However, it appears that the EPRLF has so far turned down overtures from the Minister to join forces. Recent threats to EPRLF MPs and the hijacking of the Vanni MP's vehicle and abduction of its occupants including the driver in the heart of Colombo allegedly by members of the armed forces would seem to be an indirect way of telling the EPRLF that unless it accepts the invitation to join forces with the government, the physical security of its leaders and MPs cannot be guaranteed.

READERS FORUM

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LTTE

SACHI SRI KANTHA has challenged (Readers Forum, *Tamil Times*, September '90) Jehan Perera to show a State which originated in the past two centuries without violating 'the human rights of other people'. Suggesting that many States were established in their present form by violating the human rights of many powerless ethnic groups, he asks, 'So what is this nonsense of hypothetical idealism of non-violation of the 'human rights of other people?'

The argument of Sachi Sri Kantha seems to be that it is nonsensical and hypothetical idealism to expect the LTTE not to violate the human rights of other people – Sinhalese and Muslims – in the pursuit of its aim to establish its independent State of Eelam, and therefore no one should condemn the LTTE for killing civilian Sinhalese not only in the North-East, but also those in the North Central province as they have done many times in the recent past. If this argument is right, then those extremist Sinhala chauvinist forces which want to turn Sri Lanka into a State of the Sinhala-Buddhists only can also without the fear of condemnation seek to kill or otherwise violate the human rights of Tamils, Muslims, Christians and Hindus in the pursuit of their aim!

Even though people like Sachi Sri Kantha may not be concerned about the 'human rights of other people', what has he got to say about the grave violations of the human rights, including killing, of the members of the Tamil community itself? Does he think it is justifiable in the pursuit of the struggle for the establishment of the Eelam State to:

(a) physically eliminate by killing members of other Tamil political parties and groups, militant or otherwise, on the basis of the claim by the LTTE to be the 'sole representatives of the Tamil people'?

(b) kill leaders of even unarmed political parties, for example, like the TULF leaders Mr. A. Amirthalingam and Mr. V. Yogeswaran? (I recall Sachi Sri Kantha once comparing Mr. Amirthalingam to Mahathma Gandhi and Mujibur Rahaman of Bangladesh);

(c) murder Tamil Government Agents like Panchalingam, Anthonipillai and Ramanathan and educationists like Principal Anandarajah and University don Dr. Rajini Thiranagama?

(d) kidnap Tamils and hold them until the demanded ransom is paid by relatives living abroad? Abduct Tamil and Muslim businessmen for ransom amounting to millions of rupees?

(e) take over, control, and impose severe restrictions and censorship on all Tamil newspapers published in Tamil areas?

(f) take control of the management and administration of the University of Jaffna and appoint some ill-educated armed young man to exercise control over the Vice Chancellor?

(g) forcibly and otherwise recruit Tamil children, girls and boys, as young as ten and eleven, who had not even reached the age of discretion and force them into the practice of using lethal automatic weapons and carrying cyanide capsules to commit suicide?

(h) issue an order to all parents to the effect that their children need not attend school after the eight standard after which they should help in the war effort;

(i) prevent people from leaving Tamil areas in search of physical safety and compel them on pain of death to give tens of thousands of rupees and gold jewellery or quantities of gold in return for issuing 'visas' to escape from areas where they fear violent death to themselves or their children?

(j) forcibly collect money from Tamil refugees in western countries like Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Canada?

K. Thambiah.

Kenton Lane,
Kenton, UK.

GOING TOO FAR TO RUIN

PARTS OF THE letter I had written to the Editor, congratulating him on the *Tamil Times* completing nine years publication and commending his views on the present situation in our land, have been published under the above heading, which needs clarification.

Along with the great mass of Tamil people, I have been fervently wishing and praying for the success of the L.T.T.E. in their heroic struggle to win us our legitimate rights, paying tribute to those who had laid down their lives and admiring the courage with which they were unflinchingly and relentlessly pursuing their goals.

As Mr. Sri Kanthan says in his letter, 'if the L.T.T.E. is defeated, the Tamil people will be defeated'. All the trials and tribulations we have gone through all these years, the toil, the blood, the tears, the sweat our 'boys' have shed, would prove futile and we would be plunged back into the gulf from which they were fighting to rescue us.

I have lived through the inferno that was our dear land, all these years of communal riots, of killings and devastation. I was in Maha Oya in 1958, when Senevaratne was killed in Valaichenai and witnessed the bloody backlash triggered by it and came to Point Pedro in a sailing boat along with many refugees.

In 1977 my daughter, husband and children, then living in Kegalle District, managed to escape with their lives when their house and all their belongings were set on fire and destroyed. In 1983, when a Ceylon Army truck was ambushed at Thirunelvely and thirteen soldiers were killed, the Ceylon Army went berserk and killed many people. About a dozen schoolboys returning from a tutory in a bus were pulled out, lined up and shot. Four of them were sons of my old pupils.

Then came the IPKF, whose brutalities and ruthlessness cast into shade those of the Ceylon Army.

From September 1987, for days and nights, almost at a stretch, they fired shells into residential areas and unleashed a massacre unknown in history. Panic-stricken men, women, children and infants, who cowered into bunkers were killed and their corpses left to rot and decay. Relatives from other places, who had gone to see them after a month or two, saw to their horror, only skeletons.

On 18th October 1987, my 85th birthday, shells rained all round my house, some hitting a part of the house and it is a miracle I am living to tell the tale – hundreds of people perished during this period. Many of my relatives and friends were among them. Pictures of these gruesome sights appeared in the newspapers.

This reign of terror continued unabated till the first part of 1988 and continued, in a lesser degree, till the end of the year – then, when the President of Sri Lanka and the L.T.T.E. began talking to each other in a climate of mutual trust, we breathed sighs of relief and hoped that the nightmarish days had ended.

1989 was a year of economic growth and tranquility. Happiness shone in peoples' faces, signs of prosperity were seen everywhere, plenty of money flowed in the country, most of it being Gulf money, and there were record crowds of worshippers in temples during the festival seasons.

Then, when the year-old negotiations failed and fighting erupted, there was despair and disappointment, We shuddered to think of a return to the sufferings of the past – we had hoped that a truce, however short it might have been, would give us a much needed respite to rebuild our economy which was in shambles and rehabilitate ourselves, and that the L.T.T.E. could re-start their fight for Eelam after two or three years.

But it was not to be. When Rita Sebastian wrote, 'It would be tragic if the L.T.T.E. should let the opportunity of entering mainstream politics slip out

of their hands', she was really voicing the feelings of old people like me and that prompted me to write to the Editor, but I did not mean to say that we would go to ruin.

Now that the fight is raging in our land, we submit ourselves to God's will and pray that our dear land would soon rise mighty and resplendent like the Phoenix from the ashes.

C. Subramaniam

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INHUMAN PARADISE

I DO appreciate that without advertising revenue no newspaper can be published.

However, I feel that some discretion must be made when you accept advertisements. Perhaps, some amendments could be made.

I refer to an advertisement on your inside cover page in *Tamil Times* (15 Oct. 1990), I think it is quite misleading to say the least.

Your advertisement says 'Paradise' Sri Lanka when in Page 3 your editorial reads 'Stop This Inhuman War'.

Dr. Raj Chandran

Shalimar
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IS EELAM VIABLE?

IN ONE of my previous letters (*Tamil Times*, Sept. 1990), I had mentioned the names of more than 35 recognized countries and territories with areas smaller than Eelam (consisting of a joint North-East province of Sri Lanka). These countries can be broadly categorised as follows:

1) islands, enriched with fishery resources and tropical climate
2) oil-rich countries, such as Kuwait, Quatar, Brunei and Bahrain
3) countries with civil strife, such as Lebanon and Cyprus
4) countries (territories) with industrialized economy, such as Singapore and Hongkong

Of these four categories, Eelam (at present) does not belong to either the oil-rich category or to the industrialized economy category. In physical aspects, it is endowed with fishery resources and tropical climate, but it cannot qualify as an 'island', since it has to share the borders with the 'Sinhala' Sri Lanka. The island Sri Lanka itself has become a 'Lebanon' or a 'Cyprus'.

Many 'foreign experts' believe that Eelam cannot economically sustain itself, since it lacks plantation lands (tea and rubber) and gemstones, from which Sri Lanka had earned its foreign exchange for the past four decades. In the words of one Australian pessimistic soothsayer, who is an emeritus professor at the Australian National University,

'The Sri Lanka Tamils' wisest course would be to live as law-abiding citizens, using the sensitive democratic system to convey their wishes to government and to resist those of their number who advocate separation. The latter path, even if it were physically practicable, would deny to the Sri Lanka Tamils any real hope of development, confined as they would be to the relatively waterless, powerless and resource-starved north and the east coast'. (B.L.C. Johnson, in his book, *Development in South Asia*, Penguin Books, 1983).

These 'foreign experts' are ignorant of the historical fact that long before the white buccaneers and criminal elements landed in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and North America, the Tamils had been living in this 'resource-starved' Eelam and it had sustained them for generations. Long before the British colonialists introduced tea and rubber into the central highlands of Ceylon, the Tamils living in the Eelam territory had survived for centuries by their skilful utilization of the available resources. That great chronicler of the mediæval Asia, *Marco Polo visited the Northern region of Ceylon almost 700 years ago.* He had left it to posterity that the Tamils of the 13th century Eelam 'have no grain other than rice. They have sesame, from which they make oil. They have an abundance of brazilwood, the best in the world'. In my understanding, Marco Polo's reference to 'wine' is none other than *kallu.*

Regarding Marco Polo's reference to 'flesh', I wish to reflect what Lord Soulbury said 37 years ago. In his address to the Annual General Meeting of the Ceylon Veterinary Association on 23rd May 1953, the then Governor General of Ceylon compared the economy of Ceylon to that of Denmark:

'The economy of Ceylon is, and, I think, will be mainly agricultural for a long time to come, and in an agricultural economy livestock plays, and should play an extremely important part. That means that very great care and attention must be paid to the health, nutrition and breeding of cattle, goats, pigs and poultry. . .

'Denmark possesses no tea, rubber or coconut plantations, and has very little mineral wealth – no iron ore, coal or oil – and nature has not endowed her soil with any exceptional fertility. . . (and) her territory is less than two-thirds (of that of Ceylon). . .

'How had Denmark done it? I think her success is partly due to her schools and colleges, and the agricultural bias given to the education of her people. . .

'Though it may never be possible to rival Denmark, Ceylon can, and should, do a great deal more in the sphere of livestock production than she has done. . .' (*Ceylon Veterinary Journal*, Sept. 1953).

The economic planners of Eelam would benefit much if they heed the suggestions of Soulbury for designing the economic model of Eelam. Without tea and rubber plantations and without gemstones, Eelam can be viable if we plan for it.

Sachi Sri Kantha

Medical College of Pennsylvania,
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Philadelphia, PA 19129, USA

CONTINUING SUPPORT

PLEASE keep up the great work you are doing. As long as you continue to provide an **impartial** and objective outlook on Sri Lankan affairs from a Tamil point of view, you can count on my continuing support. None of the other equivalent publications I have come across can match your editorial quality.

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SEEKING DIVINE HELP

MR. RANJAN WIJERATNE is able to talk 'big' as he has aerial strike force. The L.T.T.E. have not been able to defend against aerial attack. They need extra help to win freedom for the Tamils.

We read in the Bible that the Israelite Kings prayed to God for help when they had to fight stronger armies and God fought their battles and gave them victory. I refer the readers to the following verses in the Bible:-

2nd Chronicles Chapter 14 verses 11,12. Chapter 20 verses 12,15,17,24,27. Chapter 32 verses 8,21,22,23.

Tamils are religious people – be they Hindus or Christians. I recommend that the LTTE leaders and other concerned Tamils – be they Hindus or Christians, pray to Jesus Christ for help in this hour of calamity, and I am sure that the good Lord will fight our battle and defeat the better equipped Sri Lankan forces.

R. Benedict

88 Hope Street
Auckland 8

GOLDEN ERA

IT IS reported that LTTE is extorting from the Tamils two gold sovereigns from families in the North-East of Sri Lanka.

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu father *seeks groom for only daughter, 27, in government employment, British citizen, Mars afflicted. M 430 c/o Tamil Times.*

Practising Tamil Catholic doctor, *53, fit, kind, seeks pleasant, educated, attractive partner, 30-40, photo appreciated. Religion, nationality immaterial. M 435 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu sister *seeks partner for accountant brother, 30, in employment in London, Mars afflicted. Send horoscope, details to M 436 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu brother *seeks suitable bridegroom for his sister, 34, living in U.K. Reply with horoscope. M 437 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu brothers *seek educated groom for sister, 35, looks much younger, Stenotypist. Reply with full details. M 438 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek attractive educated partner for handsome son, 24, Malaysian citizen, Australian qualified mechanical engineer working in Kuala Lumpur. Send details, horoscope to M 439 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu brother *seeks partner with permanent residence for sister, 37, in good employment. Write with details to M 440 c/o Tamil Times.*

Tamil Hindu male, *34, 5'8", graduate seeks homeloving, decent bride. Must be British citizen or permanent resident. M 441 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Tamil parents *seek teetotaller groom for daughter, 29, CIMA finalist, Mars Ragu afflicted. Send details, horoscope. M 442 c/o Tamil Times.*

Groom *sought for graduate employed in U.K., good looking with personality, 32, well mannered and charactered. M 443 c/o Tamil Times.*

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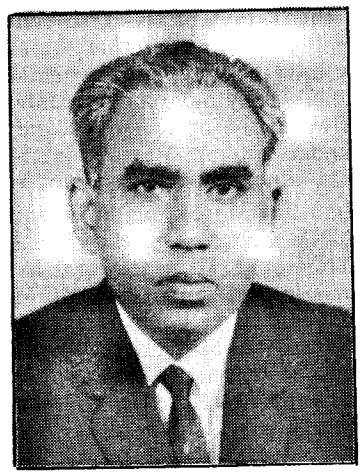
Vice-President: *Siva Gnanaratnam,*
Secretary: *Siva S. Nathan,*
Treasurer: *Candiah Kanagalingam,*
Committee: *Aloy Ratnasingham, (Past President), Kanagambigai Ragunathan, Mani Pathmarajah, C.T. Wijeyrajah, Ranji Hubert, Sam Jeyatheva, S. Tharmalingam.*

OBITUARIES

Mrs Dhanalakshmy Namasivayam, *retired Head Teacher, Sandilipay Maha Vidyalayam, Sri Lanka; beloved mother of Rajakumaran (U.K.), Rajani (Sri Lanka), Pathmini (U.K.), Srikumar (U.S.A.), Nalini (Sri Lanka), Anandakumar (West Germany), Ramani (Sri Lanka), & Sooriyakumar (Canada); mother-in-law of Jegatheeswary, Wijayaratnam, Gunaseelan, Sivakumar, Aruleswary, & Dr. Dhushiyanthakumar; grand mother of Sujanthan, Viroshini, Sujani, Jalantharai, Jalani, Kiruthika, Saranka, and Piriyan passed away in Colombo on 1.11.90 – 4 Lorne Road, London E17 7PX, Tel: 081 509 1263.*

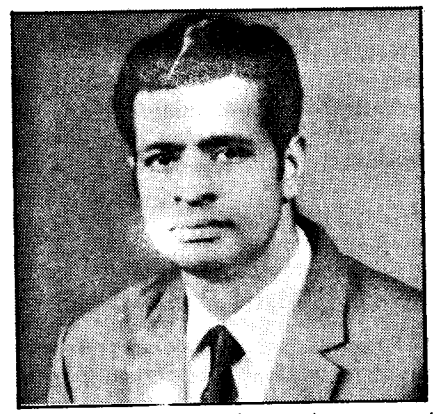


K. Nagarajah *(formerly of the Irrigation Department, Sri Lanka, and of Drainage and Irrigation Department, Sabah, Malaysia) and lately of L.G. Mouchel & Partners, U.K., expired on 8th November. Funeral took place on Sunday 11th November at Wallington, Surrey. He was the son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Kanagasabapathy of Nallur, Sri Lanka; brother of the late Karalasingam, Mrs. Jegasingam, Late Mrs. Kathiramalaipillai, Thanapalasingam, and Anantharajah; beloved husband of Nagula; loving father of Chandran, Kala and Ruby; father-in-law of Nicholas Jones and Yesmin dearest grandfather of Selina, Trisha and Jeevan – 50 Sandy Lane South, Wallington, Surrey, U.K. Tel: 081 647 8384.*

Mrs. Emily Pushpam Arulanantham *(85 years), widow of the late Rev. J.T. Arulanantham, mother of Kirupamany Karunananthan, Pararasan, Vijayan, Karunyan passed away peacefully on 15.11.90. Funeral held on 24.11.90 at Folkestone. – 3 St. Johns Church Road, Folkestone, Kent, U.K. Tel: 0303 42051.*

IN MEMORIAM

P.V. Nadarajah *Born: 13.9.1926 Passed away: 16.11.88.*



Fondly remembered on the second anniversary of his passing away by his loving wife Thilagavathy; children Usha Sivanathan, Varathan, Nalini Rajan and Nanthini; sons-in-law Sivanathan and Rajan.

In loving memory of our father **Vellupillai Alfred Thurairajah** *on the first anniversary of his passing away on 17.11.89.*

Times may change, but
Memories of you never fade.
In our hearts you will always stay
Loved and remembered everyday.

Sadly missed by his loving wife Daisy Sebamany and daughters Indranee (Canada), Pathmaranee (U.K.), Sounthararanee (Sri Lanka), Thevaranee (U.K.), Luxumy (Sri Lanka) and Swarna (Canada) – 21 Abbotts Way, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire.

Master Kevasan

10th April 1973 – 7th November 1986

In Loving Memory of **Master Kesavan,** *our dear son on the fourth anniversary of his passing away under tragic circumstances.*

We all miss you very much darling and long for all the love and affection you bestowed on us. Fondly remembered for ever by father Dr. Somasunderam, mother Chitra, brother Sanjeevan, Granny, Uncle Sam Rajah and Aunty Gina – all from U.K. – 32 Copperfield Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, SK8 7PN.

In loving memory of **Mr. Kanapathypillai Kanagasabai** *on the first anniversary of his passing away on 30.10.89.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his sons Chandramohan, Dr. Indramohan and Surendramohan; son-in-law Visvendran; daughters-in-law Sugirtharani, Dr. Pathmini, and Sarojini; and grand-children Shankar, Latha, Geetha, Aravindhan and Rishayini – 164 Quebec Street, Bolton, Lancs. BL3 5LX, U.K.

Mr. Arunasalam Subramaniam, *Attorney at Law, Urumpiray, Sri Lanka, born 12.8.1908 passed away on 10.11.1987. His beloved wife* **Mrs. Kuganeswary Subramaniam,** *born 19.7.1922 passed away exactly two years later on 10.11.1989. They are sadly missed and fondly remembered on the anniversary of their passing away by their children Khanthan and Rohini, Haran and Rathy, Gowri and Ravi Nadarajah, Rupan and Shankari, Janani and Sivaloganathan, Narthana and Abhirami, Ramanan and Dhakshini; grand children Suqi and Shamithi, Rathan and Divya, Shiranthana and Raveena, Mahisha, Vaishnavi and Arathi, Suban. Their memories are fresh in the hearts and minds of their children and grand children. – 29 Derwent Drive, Purley, Surrey CR2 1ER, U.K.*

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

December 8 *6.00pm* **Arumuga Navalar Day** *celebrations at Graveney School Hall, Welham Road, London SW17. All welcome.*

December 8 *7.00pm Academy of Arts presents* **'Valli Thirumanam' – Dance Drama** *and Variety entertainment at The Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. For details Tel: 081-968 7816/509 1263.*

Dec. 15 *6.30pm* **South London Tamil School P.T.A.** *presents* **Christmas Dinner & Disco** *at Heath Clark High School Hall, Cooper Road, Waddon, Croydon. For information Tel: 081 642 0870/679 2105/654 1381.*

Dec. 15 *7.00pm Vijayanarthanalaya presents* **Bharata Natya Arangetram** *of* **Delaney Chitra** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Murugiah of 27 Stoneleigh Road, Clayhall, Essex IG5 0JB and pupil of Mrs. Vijayambikai Indrakumar at Acton Town Hall, London W3.*

Dec. 15 *7.00pm* **Kathak** *performance by* **Sushmita Ghosh** *at the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14. Tel: 071 381 3086/4608.*

Dec. 15 *7.30pm* **South London Tamil Welfare Group** *presents* **Christmas Dinner & Disco** *at The Air Training Corps Hall, 192 Merton Road, South Wimbledon, London SW19. For details Tel: 081 879 7716.*

Dec. 22 *6.00pm* **S.C.O.T.** *presents* **Dinner & Disco** *in aid of* **Relief & Rehabilitation in the Tamil Homelands** *at Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place, off Garratt Lane, London SW17. For tickets Tel: 081 870 9897/422 8984/904 6472.*

Dec. 23 *7.00pm* **Natha Vidyalaya** *presents a* **Violin Duet** *by* **Sangeetha Vidwan Kalaivani Indrakumar** *and her sishya* **Thuvaraka Vetpillai** *at Willesden Green Library, 95 High Road, London NW10. For tickets Tel: 081 204 4623/968 7816.*

Dec. 29 *7.00pm* **The League of Friends of the University of Jaffna** *presents the Annual Dinner Dance at Winston Churchill Hall, Pinn Way, off Bury Street, Ruislip, Middlesex. For tickets telephone 0923 225850/223987.*

CHRISTMAS FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

Our Thamil brothers and sisters living in the North-East of Sri Lanka are at present experiencing genocidal violence and they cannot even dream of celebrating Christmas or New Year. Both at home and abroad, Thamils have been made refugees. We are no more Thamils or human persons, but mere 'refugees'.

We the Thamils residing outside Sri Lanka sympathise with our sisters and brothers at a time of tremendous loss, grief, pain and suffering. In expressing our solidarity with our brothers and sisters, and sharing in their grief and suffering, we shall deny ourselves the usual celebrations and enjoyment associated with Christmas and New Year festivities.

Special cards for Christmas/New Year/Pongal have been designed with a three-fold purpose: (1) To express our feelings of solidarity with our Thamil brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka; (2) To tell the world community about the plight of the Thamil community and make them aware of the fact that they are silent 'witnesses' to the ongoing genocide in Sri Lanka; and (3) To make available the proceeds from the sale of these cards to feed and clothe the displaced Thamils in the North-East.

This is an appeal to request all concerned people to buy these cards in large numbers; send them to your relatives and friends in Sri Lanka and abroad; send them to all international humanitarian, human rights, political, social, religious and funding organisations. This act will serve as a humanitarian service of peace and justice. This could be a way of bringing Christ to the people.

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An Arangetram of Professional Class

The Bharata Natya Arangetram of 16 year old Aruntha Amirthalingam, which took place at the Broadway Theatre, Barking recently, was presented by **Vijayanarthanalaya** *(Academy of Indian Arts), with Aruntha's illustrious Guru, Mrs. Vijayambigai Indra Kumar conducting her at Nattuvangam. It is creditable that Aruntha had learnt the Art in just three years under the tutelage of Vijayambigai.*

The programme commenced with a sprightly Bharatnajali and Alarippu, a flood of orange light ushering Aruntha on to the stage, setting the tempo for the items to follow. With flawless rhythm Aruntha did justice to the Jathiswaram in Raga Varali and Tala Adi. A Shabdam in Ragamalikai and Misram dedicated to Lord Natarajan dancing supreme at Thillai Ambalam served to introduce bhava adequately.

The piece de resistance of the repertoire, the Padavarnam in Vachaspati and Adi depicted Aruntha as a love-lorn lass anxiously waiting for the arrival of her lover, Lord Murugan. The long and difficult jathis, delivered with unerring precision by Vijayambigai, blended harmoniously with the shishya's footwork, making it a delight to watch. The confluence of the lyrics of K.M. Balasubramaniam, which were very moving; the music composition by Madurai T. Sethuraman; the singing of Sri K. Rajasekharan from Madras, so full of bhava; Vijayambigai's choreography abounding with elegant abhinaya and apt sanchari bhavas; the rhythm of Sri Karaikudy Krishnamurthi at mridangam and the melody of Dr. Lakshmi Jayan at violin found their outlet in Aruntha's very satisfactory interpretation of the theme of the Varnam, giving it a professional finish.

The second half of the repertoire saw a Padam, Javali and Thallattu danced in succession providing ample scope to explore the realms of bhava in a more leisurely and specialised pace. The thallattu depicting Mother Yasodha gently swaying the cradle to put Krishna to sleep proved to be a hit. The programme concluded with a lively Thillana which was studded with excellent poses.

Professor Sita Narasimhan from Cambridge University, who was the Chief Guest, aptly summed up the performance by saying that she relived an evening at Kalakshetra, Madras. Yes, it was an Arangetram of Professional Class.

– Mrs. Yoga Thillainathan.

Mridangam Arangetram

What can an eight year old do in London with the mridangam, considered the most ancient of all Indian percussion instruments? On the 27th of October young Marino, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kumarathasan provided the answer to a packed audience at the Bhavan.

Following the example of his brother Angello whose Arangetram took place last year, Marino gave a scintillating performance on the mridangam to mark his debut.

His guru Sri Muthu Sivaraja's patience, persistence and perseverance is paving the way for many young artistes in and around London to perfect their musical talents. Marino is a shining example of this.

With his guru's blessings Marino sought advanced training from Sri T.V. Gopalakrishnan presently one of India's foremost musicians. TVG renowned for his mastery of both the mridangam and vocal music and hailed as Sangeetha Laya Samrat and Gana Kala Bharat, received the President's award last month. TVG was there in person and his virtuosity with ragas and thalas helped Marino demonstrate the fullness of his repertoire. There was the traditional Vathapi Ganapathim in Hamasthwani and Adi thalam and Ananda Nadamaduvar Thillai in Poorvikalyani and Rupaka thalam. TVG excelled on Nanna Brovu in the raga Lalitha and the piece was set to the rather more complex Misrachapu thalam and Marino rose to the challenge with commendable ease.

The highlight was the song Thaye Yasoda in the raga Thodi set to Adi thalam.

TVG showed a fascinating extension of the pallavi and the graded use of the time-scale through three stages. Marino once again stuck to his task and came off with flying colours earning great praise from his gurus. The 'thaniavarthanam' kept the audience spell-bound. The second half was a mixed bag of items including many Bajans.

TVG was accompanied on the violin by Sri Thiruvarur Kothandapani, Sri Bharathan on the Ganjira, Sri Angello Kumarathasan on the Gadam, Sri Sithamparanathan on the Morsing and Sri Muthu Sivarajah on the Tabla. Sri Sivanandi Adigal, Head of London Meikandaar Atheenam was Chief Guest and Sri Stanislaus was Guest Speaker.

Sivakumar.

A Carnatic Concert of Distinction

Sri Lankan Tamils who form a sizeable section of the ethnic groups in London seem to show great partiality towards Bharata Natyam in their cultural anxiety. On the music side veena is handled by some lady artistes but concert programmes of this category are rare. Among vocalists a few ladies like Sivasakthi Sivanesan, Mathini Sriskandaraja, Saraswathi Pakiaraja and Padmini Gunaseelan have been appearing occasionally. But rarer still any male vocalist. In this climate a singular concert at the Graveney School Hall, Tooting, on 10th November last by an up and coming musician Yogeswaran provided a rare treat.

Popularly known as 'Eelathu Seerkali' after being christened as such by the venerable Krupananda Variar because of his perfect imitative style of the late Seerkazhi Govindarajan, the young and vibrant Yogeswaran held the audience spellbound that evening for more than two hours. A good selection of keerthanams, perfect enunciation, swaraprastharam and time measure, accompanied by a full ensemble of instrumentalists carried the day with acclaim. Violin accompaniment was provided by Lakshmi Jayan, a familiar figure whose services are sought after by many a musician in London. Krupakaran on the mirudangam, Chidambaranathan on the gatam and Srinivasan on the muharsing provided an enjoyable concordance in the

thani avardanam, a familiar feature in any concert programme. The lead given by Krupakaran was commendable.

Young Yogeswaran is gifted with a natural and powerful voice which could reach the higher octaves with ease, and his control of sruthi is remarkable. According to one of the speakers that evening it was revealed that Yogeswaran, from his very young age used to follow the singing of Seerkazhi Govindarajan in cassettes and like the epical Ekalaiva imbibed the master's style and manner scrupulously. No doubt it is a great achievement. While being satisfied with this much of achievement if this enterprising young singer could further his knowledge and practice for a few months by being under a classical master like Maharajapuram Santhanam, T.M. Thiagarajan or T.N. Kalyanaraman, he can be assured of a great future.

– S. Sivapatha Sundaram.

Kuravanji – a dance drama by Lakshmi Art Centre, London

The dance drama staged at the Logan Hall, London on 20.10.90 was an ambitious project with a cast of over thirty children with ages ranging from around five to the late teens.

It is not an easy task to train such large numbers of children, and, given the wide variation in age and aptitude and the difficulties in organising the activity in alien social surroundings, the achievement was quite commendable and the large audience did seem to be appreciative and receptive.

The dance performances of **Chitra Satkunananthan** who played the part of Vasanthavalli and **Vanathi Nithianathan** who played three important roles deserve comment, and they were among the few who showed the maturity and skill necessary to meet the demands of a serious theme such as the one in Kuravanji. The performance of the smaller children in group dances was graceful.

I do, however, like to make a few critical comments, not all related to the stage performance, in the interest of better standards in future performances.

One thing which the audience at Tamil Cultural activities in London lacks is a sense of discipline. Programs seldom start on time, and people talk and children run around while artistes perform.

Things were better at Logan Hall on 20th October than on other occasions elsewhere. But something could have been done by the parents or the organisers to ensure that the children were seated quietly among the audience when they finished their part on-stage.

Another matter which caused concern and considerable distraction was the 'guru' who did the nattuvangam, having to control a wide range of activities including the lighting, the orchestra and the occasional prompting, in full view of the audience. This could have been avoided by better stage management or probably by having the orchestra partly behind screen as in many dance events.

There was some lack of consistency in the costumes and there were obvious, but avoidable lapses in some of them. Careful costume design is far more important to dance dramas than dry-ice smoke clouds which are more appropriate to the silver screen and modern stage. Costume design, to be effective, does not have to be expensive, and tradition has adequate power and potential to deal with themes of this nature with great elegance and little glitter.

It would also have been very appropriate if the production drew more on the Kuravanji literary tradition with its wealth of rich and highly rhythmic poetry.

I also like to use this occasion to point out that most of the traditional Indian dance drama themes reek of male chauvinism and 'Kuravanji' is more than typically so in that respect.

This is a matter which the Tamil Society should pay some attention to if it is serious about moving into the modern era of sexual equality and feminist awareness.

Finally, I like to remind the reader that the dance drama reviewed was essentially a performance by children, many of whom are probably not aware of the Tamil-Hindu cultural background and Hindu mythology and possibly not very fluent in the Tamil language.

Activities such as this deserve support and encouragement and my comments, I hope, will not be construed as unduly critical.

S. Sivasegaram

21.10.90

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★ If you are living overseas you may travel to London to London to attend any of the above courses. Successful candidates will be issued with an admission letter. This letter may be used for foreign exchange and for U.K. Visa purposes.
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For further details write to:–

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